'Weather 101' with Al Kaprielian
Page 2

The Valley Patriot

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April, 2016
Volume 13, Issue 4
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Honoring Local Heroes

SEE PAGE 11

PHOTO: GERARD MAGUIRE

Lawrence Police Officer Mike Laliberte, and North Andover Police Sgt. Dan Lanen were two of the three recipients of the Officer Tom Duggan, Sr. Public Safety Awards at The Valley Patriot's 12th Anniversary BASH last month. Also pictured above is North Andover Selectman Phil DeCologero and Lawrence Mayor Dan Rivera Also winning an Officer Tom Duggan Award was Lawrence Fire Captain James Driscoll. SEE PAGE 11.

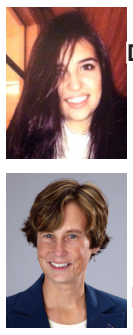
INSIDE this edition!

Jeff Katz
Page 2

Al Kaprielian.....2
Veterans.....3,21
The Andovers.....5
Methuen.....6, 7, 17
Around the Valley.....8,9, 13
Tom Duggan's Notebook....9
Lawrence.....12
Culture War.....16
Lowell, Methuen 17
Radio and TV 18
Teens.....19
PETS.....23
Religion.....20
Health 20, 24,25

Stories and photos of The Valley Patriot's 12th Anniversary BASH Pages 1,3,5,6,8,9,11,13,14

Cindy Annis' Vinyl Vault **PAGE 18**



Ana Debernardo Teen Talk **PAGE 19**

Linda Dean Campbell State Rep. **PAGE 17**

IN YOUR CORNER Sen. Ives PAGE 11

Dani Langevin Lesbian Columnist **PAGE 16**

Valley Patriots of the Year!

The Valley Patriot held our annual BASH on March 25th at the Relief's In in Lawrence and granted four local veterans with The Valley Patriot Hero Veterans Award.

Because honoring veterans is so much a part of what we do at The Valley Patriot, each year we honor local veterans who themselves honor our hero service men and women here at home. Honoring our veterans and recognizing their incredible sacrifices is one of the most important things we do at The Valley Patriot.

Massachusetts Veterans' Services Secretary Francisco Urena honored us with his presence and his presentation for the four local veterans recognized that evening.

"On Behalf of Governor Baker, Lt. Governor Polito, and the 365,000 veterans who call Massachusetts home, it is a great honor to be here in the great city of Lawrence with each and every one of you all who are great supporters of this great newspaper, The Valley Patriot," Urena said addressing the crowd of hundreds who packed the room.

"The Valley Patriot is a paper which dedicates itself to ensure the awareness of our veterans with ongoing stories of the service and sacrifice. Each month, The Valley Patriot publishes The Valley Patriot of the Month, honoring men and women who have served, who have sacrificed, and returned back to their communities to help other veterans. I know Tommy Duggan goes out of his way to make sure that they get the very front page of his paper, which is very admirable this day and age. So, for Tommy and The Valley Patriot, a great round of applause tonight."

ERIC NELSON

"We have a couple of Valley Patriot Hero Veteran Awards to give out tonight, and we're going to start with Sergeant Major Eric Nelson, United States Army, retired.

He was part of the 82d Airborne Division and the 56th Medical Evacuation Battalion, Air Ambulance at Fort Bragg, and 3rd Military Intelligence Battalion.

In 2003, Sergeant Major Nelson was an Aviation Mission Operations Manager for the 4th Aviation Brigade stationed in Baghdad, Iraq. During that mission, he trained over 300 personnel on convoy operations with no combat accidents or injuries. Nelson was awarded the Bronze Star Medal.

Massachusetts Secretary of Veterans' Services Francisco Urena (at podium). From left to right; Valley Patriot Hero Veteran Award winner Donald Jarvis, Former Middlesex County Sheriff's Deputy Dan Strange, Valley Patriot Hero Veteran Award winner J.T. Torres, veterans Gerard MaGuire, Valley Patriot Hero Veteran Award winner John Ratka and head of Veteran's North East Outreach Randy Carter.

In 2004, Sergeant Major Nelson became a Senior Aviation Trainer and performance coach stationed at the Joint Multinational Readiness Center in Europe until 2007. During that time, he facilitated workshops in community leadership, led a team of 45 trainers and experts and coached senior leadership. For his contributions, Nelson was awarded the Army Aviation Association of America's Order of Saint Michael Medal for contributions in training and developing future Army aviation leadership.

In 2007, Nelson received an honorable discharge from the military and began working at Valley Works Career Center in Lawrence to help other veterans. He continues to work there as the Local Veterans Employment Representative assisting veterans to find employment.

During his military career, Nelson received numerous awards and decorations that include: Air Medal (#2), Army Commendation Medal (4 OLC), Army Achievement Medal (3 OLC), Good Conduct Medal (6th Award) National Defense Service Medal (2), Southwest Asia Service Medal (2 Bronze Service Stars), Humanitarian Service Medal (#2), NCO Professional Development Ribbon (#3), Army Service Ribbon, Overseas Service Ribbon (#2), Kuwait Liberation Medal (Saudi Arabia), Kuwait Liberation Medal (Kuwait), Meritorious Unit Commendation, Army Superior Unit Award, Drivers Badge, Master Parachutist Badge, Senior Aircraft Crewman Badge, and the Turkish Parachutist Badge.

Ladies and Gentlemen for these reasons and so many more, I am proud to present Sgt. Major Eric Nelson the 2016 Valley Patriot Hero Veteran Award."

HERO VETERAN JOHN RATKA

Our Second 2016 Valley Patriot Hero Veteran Award goes to John Ratka.

John Ratka is the Executive Director of the Veterans Northeast Outreach Center, following a distinguished 26-year career in the United States Navy.

John enlisted in the Navy in 1972. He completed 21

VETERANS: PAGE 3

Eating Our Own

Jeff Katz
VALLEY PATRIOT COLUMNIST

I'm proud to say that Charlie Baker is my governor and my neighbor. I served with him as fellow elected members of Swampscott Town Meeting and on the Swampscott Republican Town Committee. I don't think I've ever met an elected official so focused on true public service. An exceptional man of unquestionable character working overtime to try and bring the Commonwealth back from eight years of grossly incompetent management perpetrated by a race baiting political bottom feeder in the Corner Office.

Great strides have already been made by Governor Baker and his team. He's addressed the decades of mismanagement and hack stacking throughout the state's ranks. He's worked tirelessly to ensure that the welfare system is not abused. He continues to direct his managers to provide services in a professional way with the highest degree of professionalism, while at the same time reminding them that the taxpayers are paying the bills and there must be respect shown for the people's checkbook.

Given the accomplishments of Team Baker, I'm puzzled by the assembling of the circular firing squad among some in the Massachusetts Republican ranks. I hear the knocks on Charlie and some are quite correct. He's not a social conservative is one criticism that I don't think anyone, including the Governor, would quibble with. He's long been a supporter of same sex marriage and frankly, I did not always agree with him on that. Now that my perspective on the issue matches his, I don't see that as any great problem. He and I disagree on the abortion question, as well. But what I have learned through the years is that you need to apply the marriage rule to all relationships and issues. I've been married almost seventeen years. I love my wife. I've watched her give birth to three beautiful children. I'd gladly step in front of an oncoming bus to save her life but she and I do not agree on one hundred percent of things one hundred percent of the time. So, how anyone can think that they'd agree with a political leader all the time is beyond me.

THE JEFF KATZ SHOW

There seems to be a litany of catcalls now accusing Charlie of being a RINO. Outrageous claims that he's looking to stack the Massachusetts GOP with blindly loyal acolytes and sycophants. There's no question that Governor Baker wants to help elect the strongest party leaders possible. There are a lot of slots and on some nominees you'll find yourself agreeing with his choice and on some, well, your mileage may vary. That's just the way it is when there's more than one person involved in any operation. As to the RINO charge, I just don't buy it. Your views may very well be different than Charlie's on certain issues. It no more makes him a faux Republican than your views provide you with the power to administer the official GOP litmus test.

I, for one, continue to proudly stand with my friend, neighbor and Governor… Charlie Baker.

"WEATHER 101" WITH AL!

Strong Spring Winds

Al Kaprielian
VALLEY PATRIOT WEATHERMAN

Lately, we have seen a lot of wind in the Merrimack Valley and Southern NH.

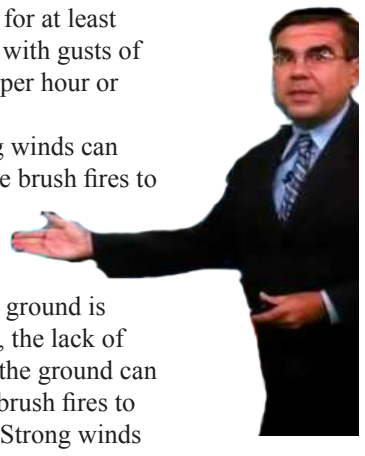
Winds are caused by differences in air pressure. When we are located between a high pressure system and a low pressure system, there is a large difference in air pressure between the high and low. In weather, we say there is a tight pressure gradient.

On a weather map, the isobars (lines of equal air pressure) are packed very close together. This indicates there is a tight pressure gradient and lots of wind between the high and low pressure. Air flows from high to low pressure. When the low moves farther away from our region and the high fills in, then the winds subside. There is now less of a difference in air pressure. Also, if a strong low level jet stream is over the area, this can enhance the winds and make them stronger.

Strong winds can cause trees and tree branches to fall. If they fall on power lines it can causes power outages. Always stay away if you see downed power lines!!!

A wind advisory is issued by the National Weather Service when the sustained winds reach between 31 and 39 miles per hour, and gusts reach between 46 and 57 miles per hour.

A high wind warning is issued by the National Weather Service when sustained winds of 40 miles per hour or greater are expected for at least one hour with gusts of 58 miles per hour or greater.



Strong winds can also cause brush fires to develop, especially when the ground is dry. Also, the lack of snow on the ground can enhance brush fires to develop. Strong winds can cause brush fires to spread rapidly. So, during this spring if you have some outdoor burning to do, make sure you check with you town or local fire officials before you start to burn.

Lastly, now that spring is here we start to think about planting flowers and vegetables and tending to our gardens. It can still get cold and snow in April like we have seen this year so its best you wait to plant until at least the middle of May.

Frost can still occur as well in April and into the first half of May. By Memorial Day weekend, however, it is pretty much safe to plant your outdoor flowers and vegetables.

In the end it is always better to be safe than sorry.

I'm Al Kaprielian with your Valley Patriot Weather 101 update GOOD EVENING! And See you next month!

The Valley Patriot is published monthly before the tenth of each month by The Valley Patriot, Inc., 75 Main St., North Andover, MA 01845. All contents Copyright (c) 2012, Valley Patriot, Inc. All rights reserved. Subscriptions are $50 per year and sent via U.S. Mail.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to Valley Patriot, Inc., PO Box 453, North Andover, MA 01845.

Letters to the editor, columns and op/eds can be submitted to **valleypatriot@aol**.com. The Valley Patriot is not responsible for the opinions expressed in submitted letters or columns. It is the policy of The Valley Patriot not to edit or exclude submitted material based on content.

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News tips: Phone in anonymous news-tips to (978) 683-3952, or you may email tips to us at valleypatriot@aol.com. We respect the anonymity of our sources if requested.

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The Valley Patriot can be found in more than 900 locations in 51 communities in Massachusetts and NH.

The Valley Patriot is not responsible for, nor do we necessarily share the opinions of columnists and contributors that are published in the paper. Columns, by definition, are opinion pieces.

The Valley Patriot is printed by Graphic Development in West Hanover, Mass.

Local daily news updates are online at facebook.com/valleypatriot

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FROM 1: Urena Honors Vets at Valley Patriot BASH!

submarine deployments, numerous surface ship deployments and attained the rank of Command Master Chief.

John's major tours of duty include: Command Master Chief Portsmouth Naval Shipyard, Command Master Chief Submarine Squadron 22, Command Master Chief Naval Air Station Lakehurst, New Jersey and Chief of the Boat U.S.S. Alaska.

"John was appointed to the position of Executive Director of the Veterans Northeast Outreach Center in Haverhill, October, 2002. Under his leadership, they established great partnerships with the Veterans Administration, Bedford, VA, the MA Department of Veterans' Services, Housing and Community Development, the Department of Housing and Urban Development, Veterans' Services Officers and many local community agencies."

"John and his two sons, Ryan and Jacob, reside in Salem, N.H. A great round of applause for Valley Patriot Hero Veteran John Ratka!"

JT TORRES

"JT Torres enlisted in the US Marines in 1987. He spent ten years in the service and accumulated numerous service medals after serving in Desert Storm, Desert Shield, and Operation Iraqi Freedom. We could read his accomplishments all day, but the most important reason JT is receiving this award tonight is because he is the president and founder of New England Veterans Liberty House."

"After returning from battle with PTSD ...JT could have walked away from the military and gone on to live his life doing something else. But JT spends his days... every day... helping veterans with counseling, job training, housing, getting them help with government services medical assistance and embodies the phrase Veterans Helping Veterans!"

"When he dropped off his resume at The Valley Patriot offices this week …. it was six pages long with a list of commendations, medals and extensive training."

For this reason and so many more, we honor JT Torres tonight with The Valley Patriot Hero Veteran's Award."

A TRIBUTE TO VIETNAM VETERAN RICH RUSSELL

Before honoring our last recipient, Secretary Urena said he wanted to leave the stage and go off program to honor a Lawrence resident who is not only a member of The Valley Patriot family, but is also a hero Vietnam Veteran with a 50th Anniversary service pin.

"When our Vietnam veterans came home..." Urena said approaching Russell. "They did not get the welcome home that my generation of veterans received. They did not receive the welcome home that the previous generation of veterans received. So, tonight, and each and every time I have the opportunity to talk to our Vietnam vets, I want to tell them 'thank you very much for your service,' and I want to tell them… WELCOME HOME!"

Urena affixed the pin on Russel's coat and Russell saluted him to the wild applause of the crowd.

"Richard Russell of Lawrence, thank you. On behalf of a grateful nation I want to present the 50th anniversary commemoration pin to Vietnam veteran, Richard Russell. But, this is not just for Rich Russell, for everything he does in the community; this pin is to ensure that we give recognition to each and every Vietnam veteran that we know. This pin has a message on the back. It says; 'On behalf of a grateful nation that thanks you, and honors you for your service.' ... and Richard, welcome home! "

To all of our veterans, thank you for your service to our country and to the families of our veterans, thank you so much, because we know that when a veteran serves, their families also sacrifice. So, thank you!

DONALD JARVIS

Former Middlesex County Sheriff, Dan Strange, then spoke about why Donald Jarvis received our final Valley Patriot Hero Veteran Award.

"I would be remiss tonight Tommy, if I didn't start off by thanking your father for his service and sacrifice," he said pointing to the banner bearing Officer Duggan's name.

"I would also be remiss if I didn't point out that you made a great point about the media earlier Tom. Let me give you one more example of how right Tom is about how bad the news media is".

I was taken aback by the news today, and I'm sure Secretary Urena will agree with this. Today, all the major news agencies reported that it was national waffle day. But, not one mentioned that it was national Medal of Honor Day. That is pathetic. We must never forget, whether it's a veteran's service, or a police officer, or a firefighter who is killed or injured in the line of duty. We must never forget what they have done for all of us. That is the most important thing any society can do."

"A few weeks ago, I talked to Tom Duggan and said the final days are coming for the BASH and we kind of overlooked one guy when putting these awards together."

"He graduated high school 2004. In 2006, he enlisted with the National Guard here in Massachusetts. He went to active duty and served tours in Iraq and Afghanistan and he made us proud. In 2012, while operating a buffalo, which is a minesweeping vehicle, the vehicle struck and IED. (improvised explosive device) and he blew up. He was injured severely. He has dramatic brain injuries, as well as his knees and his legs."

"He came home for medical treatment and spent seven months in a medical hospital in Virginia. When he was released, that wasn't all for him. Going home and moving on wasn't good enough. He needed to go back, and he needed to continue to serve, so he did."

"On April 15, 2013 he was assigned as an explosive ordnance engineer to the Boston Marathon. We all know what happened that day. Guys like Don Jarvis see bombs and run toward them, think about that. Many people serve, and this is not to take away from anyone's service, but then there are those who go above and way, way beyond. Who in this room would want to run towards a bomb? None of us."

"But, when he came home he had many issues to deal with including PTSD. We lose 22 veterans a day to suicide from PTSD. But Don Jarvis said 'I'm not going to sulk and cry, I'm going to do something about it. I'm going to become active.' And he did."

"I remember the day when one of our guys who was very close to Don, who served in Iraq and sadly took his own life. He had an 18-year-old son and was being shipped home"

"It was a day when the Massachusetts State Police were conducting a major training mission at Logan airport. We could not get an honor guard to the airport for the return of our serviceman. So, Donny and I called you, Mr. Secretary Urena and Colonel McGinn of the Massachusetts State Police, and the environmental police, who, thanks to Donny, had an honor guard to greet the families when they came off the plane carrying the remains of their loved one."

"They gave a full controlled motorcade to the family's home, which was beautiful, and meant so much to them. That was mostly due to Donnie Jarvis who always make sure that nothing falls through the cracks."

"But also, through Donnie's motivation we take homeless veterans to Red Sox games and other games. As you can see, Don has his PTSD service dog Mocha with him here tonight. Service dogs are so wonderful for our veterans. But, they can cost more than $10,000 per dog. Anyone here who has an opportunity to contribute to these causes like Delta Dog, I highly encourage you to donate."

"On June 14, on Flag Day this year, thanks to Donnie we are going to bring 30 Delta Dog veterans to a Red Sox game."

"Donny is also the Veterans Graves Registration Officer in Newbury. Last year, while taking inventory of the graves at the cemetery, he saw it was overgrown and disgraceful. There were trees coming out of headstones, and there were veterans' graves that had gone unattended for decades."

"Donnie said 'This is unacceptable and I'm going to do something about it.' Because they wouldn't allow him to operate a chainsaw in the cemetery, he got a handsaw and cut down every overgrown brush and tree over every veteran's grave, and he did it by hand. The students at Triton Regional High School even came out to help.

Everything Donnie has done has been to help veterans ... and I can't think of a more fitting recipient for this Valley Patriot Hero Veterans Award tonight than Donald Jarvis for everything you've done. Thank you Donny!

J.T. Torres, one of four winners of The Valley Patriot Hero Veteran Award with Massachusetts Secretary of Veterans' Services Francisco Urena who presided over the Hero Veteran Awards at The Valley Patirot's 12th Annual BASH!

ABOVE: John Ratka, winner of The Valley Patriot Hero Veteran Award. Donald Jarvis with Kate Whitney Grossman, The Valley Patriot's PuppyGirl presenting a check to Jarvis for Delta Dogs with Valley Patriot publisher Tom Duggan.

Vietnam Veteran Rich Russell, a member of The Valley Patriot family and organizer of the event was surprised when Secretary of Veterans' Services, Francisco Urena presented him with a 50th Anniversary Vietnam Veterans pin. At right, Sgt. Major Eric Nelson winner of The Valley Patriot Hero Veteran Award.

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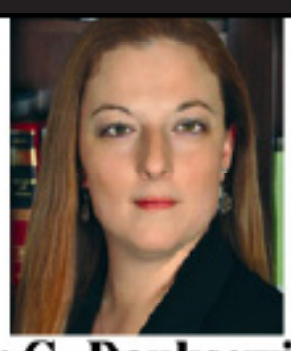

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NAHS Chris Daniels Gets Scholarship, Advice from Hollywood Actor

Hollywood actor Steve Blackwood, who played a lead role on soap opera Days of Our Lives, appeared in TV shows like Quantum Leap, NYPD Blue, The Nanny and was in several major movies attended The Valley Patriot BASH, because, he said, he wanted to help present one of our scholarships and help give back.

Blackwood sang "Fever" to the finger snapping of the audience while MTV's Brittany Baldi, (now with NECN) looked on. When he finished to the applause of the audience, Blackwood spoke about the North Andover High School student receiving the scholarship, and even gave a few words of advice once he found out that the student was majoring in film.

"Since our publisher, Tom Duggan was once the parent coordinator for the school newspaper at the Thomson Elementary School in North Andover, each year The Valley Patriot gives a scholarship to a graduating North Andover High School student who went to Thomson, and participated in the school newspaper. "

"Our recipient tonight is Christopher Daniels. Chris was a student at Thomson Elementary School who participated in student elections and student council, as well as in Thomson Paw Prints school newspaper. Even though he is no longer at the Thomson School, Chris still volunteers at playground clean-ups at Thomson, and also volunteers at the 'Kids Stop After School Program'. He is attending Massachusetts College of Art and Design in the fall, and has been accepted as a film major.

Valley Patriot BASH Platinum ($1,000) Sponsors: Kevin Leach, Joe Zingales of Team Zingales-Remax, and Mike Agricola, the new owner of Salvatore's Restaurant in Lawrence, with our Valley Patriot/Thomson School Scholarship winner Chris Daniels. Chris is graduating from North Andover High and will be attending Mass. College of Art and Design, and has been accepted as a film major. Presenting his scholarship is Hollywood superstar Steve Blackwood, with Chelsea Golan (a scholarship winner from last year) and MTV's Brittany Baldi (Now with HERALD).

One of the things that stood out in Christopher's application was when he talked about how proud he was of his grandfather, who served from 1962 to 1966 in Vietnam. Thank you for his service."

Blackwood then called up Daniels to the stage, "come on Chris, come up here I want to talk to you," Blackwood told him amid the applause of the room.

"I'm going a little off program here but I want to talk to Chris for a minute, he's going to be a film maker and I know a little bit about that."

"They told me when I was growing up in Detroit ... I said I wanted to be an actor, I want to be a film maker."

"They said, no. 90% of these guys are unemployed, you are not going to be able to make a living, it's not going to happen. Why don't you become an engineer? Engineers make good money. I said, 'No. I love acting, I love films, I want to do television.' They said, 'I don't know, you won't make good money.'"

"Well, on Days of Our Lives I made six figures. Do you why I went and did that anyway? Because, it's not about the money. It's because you have to follow what you love to do. If you follow what you love to do, the gold will come."

Blackwood then presented The Valley Patriot Thomson School Scholarship of $400 to Chris Daniels. MTV's Brittany Baldi also presented Daniels with a t-shirt from her time on MTV.

Daniels is the second student from North Andover High who attended Thomson and received this scholarship award. Two years ago, Victoria Deshaies, who was one of Tom Duggan's students, also received the scholarship. Her parents were in attendance and even donated $100 to the BASH scholarship, bringing Daniel's total to $500.

ANNE'S ANDOVER NOTEBOOK

BY, ANNE KNOWLES

THE CENTER AT PUNCHARD has several programs this month that will appeal to many seniors and boomers.

The Best American Short Stories 2016 – will be held on Mondays: April 4, April 11, April 25, May 2, May 9. Hours are 1:30 until 3pm. Books can be requested from the Memorial Hall Library. "The Siege at Whale Cay" and "Fingerprints". Eileen Reilly will be the discussion leader. To register for this program, call 978-623-8321 or online at myactivecenter.com. Program cost is $15.00.

Additional programs scheduled for April will be Red Sox Opening Day at the Center on April 11, at 11:45am. April 14 at 6:30, The 5 Most Dangerous Foods at the Supermarket. $5 Fee. Songbirds of the Northeast with Naturalist John Root will be held Friday April 15, 11:30am. $5.00 includes desserts and beverages.

Seniors and Boomers are invited check the many activities available through the Center at Punchard for the many activities that will appeal to all ages. There are programs for outdoors, hobbies, socials, and special interests. Contact the Center at 978-623-8321 or the website at andoverseniorcenter.com

ELDER SCAM - I received a phone call the other day telling me that I had won an all expenses paid cruise. Wow, after the winter we have had, it sounded too good to be true. It was. But, since I have been getting e-mails, numerous phone calls and even a real letter, telling me that I can get a federal grant and I don't have to pay it back, I am a little suspicious. NO! I am a lot suspicious.

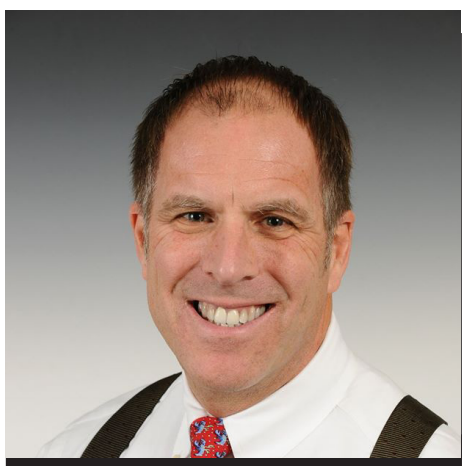
Talking to some friends and acquaintances about my "good fortunes", we decided that there are a lot of people and/or scam operatives out there. So, beware of anything that sounds too good to be true.

Especially, if you are elderly, as I am, careful with your income, and trusting.

So, if any of these e-mails or calls are of concern, we do have resources. The Andover Police Department has Officer Robin Cataldo, who works with care with elders who feel that they may be victims of a scam. The Senior Center at Punchard in Andover, may be able to help direct older people to organizations that can offer help.

Scams against the Elderly are not "victimless crimes" in fact they can devastate the well-being of an individual and make their life a misery. However, there is help and advice available and here in Andover, many opportunities to address concerns.

*** 1,187 VOTES**
ROSEMARY SMEDILE



1,138 VOTES
CHRIS NOBILE

Smedile Retains Seat on Board of Selectman

Last month, voters in North Andover returned five-term North Andover Selectman Rosemary Smedile to the board.

Smedile defeated challenger Chris Nobile by 549 votes with only 18% of the registered North Andover voters turning out at the polls.

Smedile's final vote was 1,687 to Nobile's 1,138 votes.

Nobile had challenged Smedile saying that she hadn't done enough to be proactive on the board and called her to task, saying that there needed to be more communication and coordination with other town boards. Nobile also blamed Smedile for the Bradstreet School Project downtown saying she should have chosen a better plan for the project.

Smedile said she was pleased at the turnout for her candidacy, stating, "I think voters of North Andover know what I've done on the board over the years and they know that I am going to keep working for them."

North Andover Selectmen serve three year, staggered terms. Smedile was the only incumbent up for re-election this year.

North Andover voters also chose a new school committee member last month.

Amy Mabley defeated Catherine Anne Koch by 500 votes. Mably garnered 1,589 voted to Koch's 1,049 voted.

In the Housing Authority race, former school committeeman Laurie Burzlaff was defeated by Francis McCarthy by 185 votes.

Only 2,850 voters bothered to show up at the polls for this municipal election.

Congratulations to the Valley Patriot
on 12 years of wonderful accomplishments!
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5 Year Capital Improvement Plan Prepared for Schools

DJ Deeb
METHUEN SCHOOL COMMITTEE

After several years of asking for an updated Capital Improvement Plan for Methuen Public Schools, Facilities Director Bruce Stella presented a comprehensive 5-year plan for Facilities and Maintenance to members of the School Committee to review at our March 28th Workshop Meeting. Currently, the Methuen School Committee is working with Methuen School Administrators to prepare the Fiscal year 2017 budget and the Capital Improvement Plan was presented as part of that planning process.

Members of the Methuen School Committee are in their initial stages of preparing a Fiscal Year 2017 budget for consideration by the Methuen City Council. This is always a challenge each year because the budget is based on a foundation formula set by the State and these figures as well as State aid to Methuen is usually not known until the late spring when the Massachusetts State Legislature establishes their annual budget for the Commonwealth and releases the final figures for Chapter 70 funds that they will provide for school districts throughout the Commonwealth.

One crucial piece to this planning encompasses the local 5-year Capital Improvement Plan for Facilities and Maintenance for Methuen Public Schools. In campaigning for re-election last year, I made the case regarding the need for an updated plan as did several other School Committee members. I am pleased to report that this important piece has finally been put together. Methuen Public Schools Facilities Director Bruce Stella is to be commended for compiling a very comprehensive and detailed Plan for our future. In his presentation, Stella noted that the 5-Year Plan "identifies the need for financing capital projects, keeps the Committee informed about future needs and projects, and encourages careful project planning and design to avoid costly mistakes and help our school community reach its desired goals."

It should be noted that the Capital Improvement Plan addresses the current and anticipated needs of Methuen's five school buildings: 1) Comprehensive Grammar School; 2) Marsh Grammar School; 3) Tenney Grammar School; 4) Timony Grammar School; and 5) Methuen High School. It also contains a plan for maintaining the Central Administration Building, which houses our Administrators. Some of the projects being planned for include boiler repair/replacements, roof repairs, wall patching, window replacements, and door repairs. Obviously, having a 5-year plan and budgeting enables the school district to plan for maintenance and to spread out the cost over the next 5 years in order to budget for what needs to be done and save the taxpayers significant money over the long-term.

On another note, Technology Director Ed Lussier has been doing a commendable job researching new technology and software programs to integrate in Methuen Public Schools to allow teachers and staff to better communicate with students and staff, post assignments, record grades, and map curricula lessons. A recommendation will be forthcoming on this shortly as part of the budget process

Over the next few months, members of the Methuen School Committee and the Administrative team will be working together to plan for the future and prepare a budget for next year that addresses the needs of our students while ensuring fiscal responsibility for the taxpayers of our city. It is important that this budget meets the needs of all of our stakeholders. I will continue to keep Valley Patriot readers informed of these developments in the months ahead.

D.J. Deeb is a Methuen resident and member of the Methuen School Committee. Deeb is an Adjunct Professor of History/Government at Bunker Hill Community College and an Adjunct Political Science Instructor at the University of Massachusetts Lowell. He teaches Social Studies full-time at Reading Memorial High School. He is the author of Israel, Palestine, and the Quest for Middle East Peace (University Press, 2013) and The Collapse of Middle East Peace (IUniverse, 2003).

Kassandra Jean-Marie Wins Valley Patriot GLTS Scholarship

For the second year in a row, The Valley Patriot awarded a scholarship to a student graduating from the Greater Lawrence Technical School in Andover.

The winners are researched, interviewed and chosen by Greater Lawrence Technical School Committeeman Jessica Finocchiaro.

"I'm proud to say this is the 2nd annual scholarship from The Valley Patriot to a Greater Lawrence Technical School student. As many of you know, before Tom Duggan was reporting the news he was making news as a Lawrence School Committee member. But, what most people don't know is that Tom attended the GLTS in the carpentry shop before transferring to Lawrence High School. He also was a substitute teacher at the GLTS, and is committed every year to helping a GLTS student go on to college."

"This year's scholarship winner is Kassandra Jean-Marie."

"Kassandra is the daughter of Karine and Marcel Jean-Marie from Methuen, and is a senior in the Health Career Program at Greater Lawrence Technical High School."

"Kassandra is the top ranked student in the Class of 2016. She will use her technical skills and knowledge to further her education in Pre-Medical Studies next year as a college freshman."

"Kassandra has made outstanding contributions to our school community in and outside of the classroom. She has been both a member and president of the National Honor Society. She is also co-president of the Class of 2016 and is the student representative to the district school committee. She has volunteered community service hours at Lawrence General Hospital numerous times throughout high school and just completed the Lawrence General Hospital Shadow a Professional Program.

We also want to thank Lawrence General Hospital for being a first year sponsor of our annual BASH and we hope to have a great working relationship with LGH in the coming year.

Kassandra has also participated in the Interact Club and was recognized by WHDH-TV with the Channel 7 Class Act Award, and as a junior was awarded the Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute Book Award, due to outstanding grades and community service. Kassandra has demonstrated great discipline in a rigorous course of study that has included honors courses, Advanced Placement English, and dual enrollment courses. Kassandra has completed four college courses through the Dual Enrollment Program at Northern Essex Community earning fourteen credits.

Kassandra is ranked first in a class of 316 seniors with a 4.46 GPA. Kassandra will continue to her education in the hopes of eventually attending medical school. Kassandra has been accepted and will attend University of Massachusetts Amherst Commonwealth Honors College."

"Tonight I am proud to present Kassandra Jean-Marie as our 2016 GLTS scholarship winner."

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Valley Patriot Artie T. Demoulas Scholarship winner, Kasey Potvin of Goffstown, NH (Store #71 in Bedford, NH) receives a $400 scholarship. At her left is Mike Agricola of Salvatore's Restaurant in Lawrence. At Kasey's right is last year's Artie T. Demoulas Scholarship winner Chelsea Golan and MTV's Brittany Baldi. PHOTO AT RIGHT: MTV's Brittany Baldi and Days of Our Lives star Steve Blackwood greet Methuen's Patrick McRobbie upon winning his scholarsihp. McRobbie (Store #6 in Salem, NH). Below is Valley Patriot platinum sponsor Kevin Leach with Ryan Jackson from Auburn, NH (Store #66 in Hookset, NH).

Celebrities Greet Market Basket Employees At Valley Patriot BASH

Famous weatherman Al Kaprielian, MTV's Brittany Baldi, and Hollywood star Steve Blackwood greeted three Market Basket employees at The Valley Patriot's annual BASH as the newspaper and our sponsors, gave each employee a $400 scholarship. The scholarship was started last year as The Valley Patriot's way of thanking the Market Basket employees who took a hit to the pocketbook by walking off the job and saving our MORE FOR YOUR DOLLAR STORES.

MTV's Brittany Baldi (now with Wicked Bites and NECN) was on The Challenge, and Are You the One took the microphone to call up each recipient of the scholarship; Kasey Potvin of Goffstown, NH, (Store #71 in Bedford, NH), Ryan Jackson from Auburn, NH, (Store #66 in Hookset, NH), and Patrick McRobbie, Methuen, MA (Store #6 in Salem, NH).

"The Valley Patriot got more than 36 applications for this scholarship," Baldi told the crowd as her parents looked on.

Turning to the scholarship winners, Baldi encouraged the students to stay in school and get as much education as they can.

" I want to encourage you all to stay in school, and do well with your studies, but most importantly, I also want to encourage you to explore while you are at school. Life is more than just books and lessons; it's about thriving, learning, and exploring all your own natural talents.

"Some of you standing before me could be the next Steve Jobs or inventing the next iPhone. You could own your own basketball team like talented businessman Mark Cuban. Or even become the next professional athlete. Colleg e is about learning, studying and starting a new chapter in your lives. But do not forget, it does not stop there. The journey of learning in life continues and I want to encourage you to strive in school but also push yourselves and your soul to it's ultimate potential."

"Best of luck and thank you for inviting me again this year."

Baldi presented each scholarship winner with a t-shirt and also donated the sneakers she wore on The Challenge for The Valley Patriot's sports auction.

Baldi then told the crowd why each student was receiving the scholarship.

"Ryan Jackson of Auburn, NH works at the Market Basket in Hooksett, NH. He will be attending Bentley University in the fall, and will be pursuing a degree in Economics and Finance. As a student at Pinkerton Academy, he's a member of both the National Honor Society and the National Technical Honor Society, as well as being an award-winning member of the Future Business Leaders of America and an officer of the SkillsUSA chapter. He has been very active in the Career and Technical Education programs at Pinkerton. He plans to continue working for Market Basket while attending college.

"Kasey Potvin of Goffstown, NH. is 18 years old and a graduating senior in the National Honor Society at Goffstown High School. She is the 2nd of three children to Alan Potvin and Kathy (Thomas) Potvin who are both originally from Lawrence, MA. "I couldn't be more excited to be attending UMass at Lowell in the fall with a major in Nursing (a goal of mine since a very young age). I feel strongly that the model of how to treat people regardless of their position or status was well established by Mr. Demoulas. I am very proud to say that I'm an employee of Market Basket, store 71 in Bedford, NH. I'm looking forward to incorporating the virtues that I have learned from Mr. Demoulas' demonstration during a crisis into my life and career.

Patrick McRobbie is a 17-year-old senior at Methuen High School. He has worked at Market Basket for over two years in store #6 in Salem, NH as an assistant front end manager.

In the fall, he is planning on attending Plymouth State University as a Psychology major. He began working at Market Basket on the weekends when he was 15 years old. At 16, he started working the closing shift and says he really began to enjoy the environment that was provided at Market Basket. "When I was promoted in May of 2015, I was very excited. I truly believe that Market Basket has a remarkable management training program."

Platinum sponsors Kevin Leach, Joe Zingales of Team Zingales-Remax, and Mike Agricola, owner of Salvatore's in Lawrence were also called to the stage to help with the presentation.

Local Rep., Boston Doctor Win 1st Amendment Award

Methuen State Representative Diana DiZoglio and Cambridge Doctor Bharani Padmanabhan were both bestowed one of the highest honors by The Valley Patriot last month when they were each given the newspaper's First Amendment Award.

Each year, The Valley Patriot's 1st Amendment award is given to two individuals who show with their actions that they value the 1st Amendment to the Constitution. This award is given at our annual BASH in March.

Valley Patriot publisher Tom Duggan told the crowded room at the Firefighter's Relief's In (yes that's s how it's spelled) last month, that protecting and defending the first amendment was one of the most important things anyone in a free society can do.

"Winners of this award have made a significant difference in transparency in government, acted in a bipartisan way to protect the taxpayers, and gone above and beyond to defend and protect our right of free speech, a free press, freedom of religion, and/or taking great risks to be a whistle-blower."

"Each nominee tonight should be very proud of their Valley Patriot nomination whether they win or not."

"In previous years, this award has been won by Massachusetts State Auditor Suzanne Bump, State Senator Kathleen O'Connor Ives, State Rep. Jim Lyons, and lifelong whistleblower Michael Sweeney (now the State Lottery Commissioner) who won the First Amendment Lifetime Achievement Award last year for his decades of exposing corruption in the City of Lawrence."

The first award tonight goes to Dr. Bharani Padmanabhan who has been exposing corruption in the medical industry for the last five years.

Dr. Bharani became a whistle blower when he found out that his Multiple Sclerosis patients at Cambridge Hospital were being misdiagnosed because medical professionals were faking reports of the brain scans of his and other doctor's patients."

"Dr. Bharani also got involved and defended free speech when the state tried to seal records in the Justine Pelletier case... a case where a sick child was kidnapped by the state, and whose parents were wrongly accused of abuse because... as we found out thanks to Dr. Bharani ... Massachusetts state laws says that once a child becomes a ward of the state it is legal to conduct medical experiments on them. That's 100% true," Duggan said to the gasps of the crowd.

Lawrence Mayor Dan Rivera, Chairman of the Dracut Board of Selectmen Tony Archinski, 1st Amendment Award winner Dr. Bharani Padmanabhan, State Senator Bruce Tarr (R-Newbury), and 1st Amendment Award winner Diana DiZoglio.

"So, when the state tried sealing the court records in the Pelletier case, Dr. Bharani filed a motion with the court on behalf of The Valley Patriot to have the records released to the public. Because he did that, those records were unsealed by a judge in Superior Court and we, the public, got to find out exactly how badly the Pelletier family and other families like them are treated by the medical community and the State of Massachusetts."

"What's more," Duggan continued, "Dr. Bharani has been telling us for five years that the state's Board of Registration in Medicine (called BORIM) was so corrupt that they had stripped him of his ability to bill his patients as retaliation for his whistle blowing at Cambridge Hospital. And if that was not bad enough, they are now trying to take his medical license despite the fact that he was cleared of any wrongdoing by Cambridge Hospital itself."

"So, I went to the BORIM meeting and was absolutely stunned by what I saw. Now remember, I cover Lawrence so it takes a

FIRST AMENDMENT: PAGE 23

TOM DUGGAN'S NOTEBOOK

WANT YOUR EVENT OR ORGANIZATION LISTED IN THE NOTEBOOK? FOR $150 WE WILL PUBLISH YOUR NOTICE, EVENT, ETC. (150 word max)

EDITION #150 - In case you didn't notice the small number at the top of page one, this is our 150th edition of The Valley Patriot. While we were all celebrating the newspaper's 12th anniversary last month we kind of glossed yet another major milestone. Now, I know you are trying to do the math and 150 doesn't evenly go into 12 years and one month, but that's because on three occasions, The Valley Patriot published a special election edition.

SALISBURY'S NEIL HARRINGTON

You have to hand it to Salisbury Town Manager Neil Harrington. Not only is he the king of concealing public records but, he sure knows how to gain influence on Beacon Hill. One of the key senators involved in amending the new public records reform bill happens to be Senator Joan Lovely of Salem... you know, the same town that kicked Harrington out as mayor. Harrington has been a long-time friend of Senator Lovely and made a $100 donation to her campaign just a few short days before the public records reform bill came up in the state senate, ... and about a year after Senator Lovely hired Harrington's daughter Grace, to be her chief of staff. Surprise, surprise, Senator Lovely refused to support a measure within the public records reform bill, which would have fined elected officials who conceal public records. And I would know, I wrote that provision in the bill. But, that's not all. Harrington also made a $100 donation to the campaign of... wait for it... Secretary of State Bill Galvin, the chief opponent to the public records reform bill. They say money doesn't buy happiness, but it sure as hell buys a lot of favors to help conceal public records with impunity.

SO MANY NAMES, SO FEW PRISON PRIVILEGES - Last year, The Valley Patriot reported that illegal alien Milagros Dominguez (AKA Dirma Espada, AKA Milagros Mattias, AKA Dirma Dominguez, AKA Milagros Espada) had been arrested by the feds for Medicare fraud. Thanks to a Valley Patriot report by Janet Aldrich, we were able to publish photos and a full report on Dominguez' illegal activity last year. As it turns out, Dominguez had 15 social security numbers and was convicted of using those numbers to illegally get government benefits. Last month, Milagros laughingly told her radio audience that she was taking a "vacation" in the Dominican Republic explaining that she wouldn't be on the radio for a few months. Truth is, she is in Donald Wyatt Detention Center in Central Falls, RI.

CELEBRATING SEXISM - Last month our good friend and State Rep. Diana DiZoglio held a Methuen Young Women's Career Day at Methuen High School. While DiZoglio was trying to do a noble thing, I thought that in the year 2016 we had done away with such sexism, prejudice, and discrimination. Was there a separate-but-equal school event where DiZoglio held a Young Men's Career Day at Methuen High School? Don't be silly. When I broached the topic on Facebook my concerns (valid as they are) were dismissed as DiZoglio told me that if "I" wanted to hold a career day for men.... I was free to... which is the same as saying "No, I only care about women, and nobody thinks that's sexist but you, so I'm going to keep doing it." You all know I love Diana, but this kind of dismissive, conditioned thinking about discriminating against boys is the reason that our culture is in such trouble today. I want to urge the Methuen state rep. to rethink her position and consider having a young men's career day to show young men in her district that she cares about everyone, not just women like herself. Otherwise, she is perpetuating bigotry and discrimination, and we can't have that!

MORE ON SEXISM AND BIGOTRY DISGUISED AS TOLERANCE

Consider this: we are constantly being preached at on television that bigotry, discrimination, and prejudice are bad in all forms. In fact, it's so much a part of the American psyche that it's not even questioned as the standard of public discourse and societal norms. For example, women should be treated equally to men is a concept that few could disagree with. At least in concept. But, along comes Donald Trump, who insulted and belittled everyone who got in his way. He referred to Marco Rubio as "Little Marco", called Ted Cruz "Lyin' Ted", called Senator Lindsey Graham "stupid" and a "loser", but the minute he insulted Carly Fiorina or Megyn Kelly, the so called "news reporters" on every station bemoaned his insults as "sexist". Weird right? Sexism is treating someone different because of their sex. What Trump did was treat the women who got in his way exactly the same as he treated the men who got in his way. So, why did the news call his comments "sexist"?

The answer is simple, "sexist" has been redefined for political purposes. Sexism in the American lexicon no longer means treating someone different based on their sex, it now means any comment or action that any individual woman chooses to find offensive. So, what we have here is a conundrum. On the one hand, women are supposed to be treated equally to men in all forms. On the other hand, if women are treated equally badly, so called "women's advocates" and so called "news reporters" whine and cry that someone was being mean and might be hurting women's little feelings. So, are women to be treated equally? Or, are men supposed to treat them like shrinking flowers who need to be protected by words that make them cry? What we see on CNN and the other TV news channels every day suggests the latter.

You can't have it both ways. Either women are equal to men or not. If they are equal, then those who pretend to be "women's advocates" and "news reporters" need to walk the walk, and suck it up when being treated "equally" means being treated badly. For whatever his faults, Donald Trump's attacks on Megyn Kelly, Carley Fiorina or any other woman shows how equally he sees and treats women. But, you won't hear that truth uttered on CNN, Fox, or any other "news" station on TV. Reporters are no longer reporters of facts. They are instead, lobbyists for particular candidates and approved political points of view. The more you see through the lies the better educated and informed you will be about what's really going on.

MORE MEDIA LIES - Whether you like Trump or you hate him you have to admit one thing, the so called "news" media is engaging in propaganda that would make Baghdad Bob beam with pride. Last month, Trump said that there "would probably be riots" if he had the most delegates at the GOP convention and they stole the nomination from him. He didn't say he wanted riots. He didn't say there should be riots. He merely supposed that if the Republican National Committee stole the nomination from him, there "would probably be riots." But that's not what the media reported. Within minutes, CNN's Jake Tapper, Brianna Keiler, and the rest of the Democrat Party lobbyist who masquerade as "news reporters" all lead off their newscast with the same phrase. "Presidential candidate Donald Trump called for riots today if he doesn't get the GOP nomination." This was a lie. A big one. And it was done on every single TV news station in America, using the same exact wording. That's not an accident folks. I fully agree that Trump has said and done some monumentally stupid and dangerous things since the campaign began. But, the job of the news media is to tell you what someone actually says, not to tell you what to infer or read into what they said. The news media is not just slanting the news, they are outright making it up. And there are no exceptions. Love Trump? Hate Trump? Either way, you should love him or hate him for what he actually says, not what CNN and the rest of the liars in the news media pretends he says.

BASH SUMMARY - Each year, The Valley Patriot reaches out to our network of friends, advertisers, and supporters, to raise money for our annual BASH! Because of the BASH we are able to help local people, charities, and organizations that we feel are worthy of being helped. Thank you to our advertisers, our BASH attendees, our sponsors (listed below), and donors. Because of them, we gave scholarships to seven graduating high school seniors, and awards to two hero police officers, one hero firefighters, and four hero veterans. The success of our event last month also helps us to fund the Menorah lighting in North Andover, One Tail at a Time Dog Rescue in Groveland, and several other charities near and dear to my heart like the North Andover Firefighter's Scholarship fund. Please thank our advertisers by doing businesses with them and please do business with the sponsors of our annual event. Without them both, there would be no scholarships or awards and there would certainly be no Valley Patriot!

BASH AWARD WINNERS LISTING

GOODWILL AMBASSADOR AWARD: Haverhill resident Jack Roy and Mike and Candy Colizzi of Colizzi Memorials in Methuen. PRESIDENT'S AWARD: Maria Fiato and Janet Aldrich. EDITOR'S CHOICE AWARD: Cartoonist Dave Sullivan. 1ST AMENDMENT AWARD: Dr. Bharani Padmanabhan and State Rep. Diana DiZoglio. HERO VETERAN AWARD; Don Jarvis, Eric Nelson, JT Torres and John Ratka. OFFICER TOM DUGGAN PUBLIC SAFETY AWARD: Lawrence Police Officer Mike Laliberte, Lawrence Fire Captain James Driscoll, and North Andover Police Sgt. Dan Lanen.

VALLEY PATRIOT SCHOLARSHIP WINNERS - This year's Valley Patriot/ Artie "T" Demoulas scholarship winners were; Kasey Potvin of Goffstown NH (Store #71 in Bedford NH), Patrick McRobbie of Methuen (Store #6 in Salem, NH) , and Ryan Jackson of Auburn, NH (Store 66), each of whom took home $400 for school. The North Andover Thomson School Scholarship winner was Chris Daniels ($400) with an additional $100 donated by the parents of Victoria Deshaies the 2014 scholarship winner. The Lawrence High School Scholarships went to Thu Dang and Kevin Venderhost ($600 each). The Greater Lawrence Technical School Scholarship went to Kassandra Jean Marie.

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THE BASH COMMITTEE! Without the volunteers who help us put together our annual BASH, the event would simply not take place. From the day after the previous BASH until the next event, our steering committee plans and works to make the event even better than the year before. Thank you to Maria Fiato, Rich Russell, Brenda Rozzi, Chris Eldredge, Keith Wlodyka, Deb Canejo, Kevin Leach, Beverly D'Amico, Jen Jones, Gracemarie and Joyce Tomaselli, John Bergeron and though he didn't make any meetings, Paul Murano who performed with his guitar during cocktail hour. Also a special thank you to Melvern Taylor who sang his "Paying Attention" song to open the evening, and famous weatherman Al Kaprielian for spending the night with us again this year and helping to plan behind the scenes.

A FINAL THANK YOU TO THOSE DONATING THEIR SERVICES

Thank you to all of the local businesses

NOTEBOOK: PAGE 26

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Lawrence Fire Captain Jim Driscoll (above, far right), Lawrence Police Officer Mike Laliberte (2nd photo far left), and North Andover Police Sgt. Dan Lanen (2nd photo, middle) were all recipients of the Valley Patriot Officer Tom Duggan, Sr., Public Safety Award. North Andover Selectman Phil DeCologero (right photo, far right) and Lawrence Fire Chief Moriarty (left photo far, left) were on hand to honor the recipients.

Officer Tom Duggan, Sr., Public Safety Awards

On March 16, 1990, Lawrence Police Officer Tom Duggan, Sr., lost his life in the line of duty. He was a man who loved being a police officer and lived his life responding to cries for help in the community. Each year, The Valley Patriot honors his service and sacrifice with "The Valley Patriot, Officer Tom Duggan, Sr., Law Enforcement Award."

The award is given to members of public safety (police or fire) and/or a civilian who honors the service and personal sacrifice police officers and firefighters make every day.

Valley Patriot publisher Tom Duggan is the son of Officer Duggan and personally picks the recipients of this award each year. Officer Duggan's granddaughter, whom he never got to meet, greeted the attendees and read the purpose of the award, then introducing the Fire Chief from Lawrence to grant the first award.

LAWRENCE FIRE CAPTAIN
JAMES DRISCOLL

"The 1st Award tonight is given to Captain Jimmy Driscoll who joined the Lawrence Fire Department in 2002," Chief Moriarty said.

"He was promoted to Permanent Lieutenant in 2011, and then promoted to Captain on April 26, 2015 where he took over the Fire Prevention Bureau.

There, not only did he have the responsibility of previewing construction plans, sprinkler drawings, and keeping current with the ever changing codes and laws … but as the Captain, he also has to meet with contractors about the numerous projects undergoing in the city. He is also responsible for the fire investigation and public education programs that are continuously in demand."

"Captain Driscoll completely overhauled the inspection program for the City of Lawrence, and has mentored numerous younger firefighters in their careers, convincing them to study for promotions, attend classes, and even transfer to fire prevention to broaden their extent of knowledge, which in turn has also improved our relationship with the general public."

"Captain Driscoll does not just provide leadership to the Fire Prevention Bureau; he is also the President of the Relief's In, having saved the club in dire times and turning it into a very successful business."

"For these reasons, we are proud tonight to name Lawrence Fire Captain James Driscoll as the first Officer Tom Duggan, Sr. Public Safety Award."

LAWRENCE POLICE OFFICER
MIKE LALIBERTE

With Lawrence Police Chief Fitzpatrick absent from the event, Lawrence Mayor Dan Rivera stepped in to read the reasons why Lawrence Police Officer Mike Laliberte is the recipient of the 2nd Officer Tom Duggan award.

"Our 2nd Officer Tom Duggan Award tonight goes to Officer Mike Laliberte."

"On, Jan 25th this year, Officer Mike Laliberte was conducting a vehicle stop on Mount Vernon Street when he heard a call dispatched over the radio. The location of the call was also on Mount Vernon St., so Mike rushed to the scene of the incident."

"A Women on the 911 line said that she was driving when her sister, a passenger in the vehicle, had passed out and was bleeding."

When Officer Laliberte arrived, the woman was unresponsive and without a pulse. Mike pulled the woman from the car onto the ground, administered CPR for roughly 4 minutes, and when the EMTs arrived and took over, the woman was alive as she was taken by ambulance to the hospital."

"It was the first time in his fifteen year career as a police officer that he ever performed CPR. Ladies and gentlemen, Lawrence Police Officer Mike Laliberte."

NORTH ANDOVER
POLICE SGT. DAN LANEN

At this point in the evening, Chairman of the North Andover Board of Selectmen, Rosemary Smedile came to the podium to explain why North Andover Police Sgt. Dan Lanen received the award.

"Our final Officer Tom Duggan Award tonight goes to North Andover Police Sergeant Danny Lanen. Dan was hired as a police officer 1994 and promoted to Sgt. in 2012. He is the officer in charge of the 4-12 shift and is the department's Medical Officer."

"On September 11th last year, Officer Dan Lanen was on his way to the North Andover Mall for a lunch break. While enroute, he saw a car pulled to the side of the road with a female lying in the road unconscious."

"Sgt. Lanen immediately recognized the signs and symptoms of opioid overdose and, as the department's Medical Officer, quickly used the Narcan from his duty bag, and performed breathing on the woman with help from other officers, saving the woman's life."

"Officer Lanen has also performed several other heroic acts. In 2009, he was first to respond to a call of a person drowning in Berry Pond. After running a quarter of a mile to get to the pond, Lanen jumped in 45° water to search for the victim."

"While Dan was not successful in saving that victim, he very well could've lost his life that day in the attempt. For those of you who don't know Berry Pond, it's a pond at the end of Sharpner's Pond Road, full of rocks and debris. He was truly, truly risking his life."

"For these reasons and so many more, we are proud to present the final Tom Duggan Hero Award to Sergeant Dan Lanen."

Valley Patriot Awards Volunteers, Contributors

Each year The Valley Patriot gives awards in three categories to people who volunteer, contribute, or pitch in during the many special projects and charities the newspaper is involved with throughout the year. The three categories of awards are: The Valley Patriot Goodwill Ambassador Award, The Valley Patriot President's Award, and The Valley Patriot Editor's Choice Award.

The Goodwill Ambassador Award is given to someone not employed by the paper but who helps promote The Valley Patriot and the various projects the paper gets involved in.

Presenting Haverhill resident Jack Roy with his award was his newly found sister, Laurie Grant, and his newly found niece, Stephanie Jaskott.

"The first Goodwill Ambassador Award tonight goes to Haverhill resident, Jack Roy."

"On a daily basis Jack Roy checks into The Valley Patriot office, when a driver quits or doesn't show up Jack fills up his car with papers and goes out and covers the route. And I know this because I have been there when Jack will be on his way back from Boston for his chemotherapy appointments when he says, 'I have to help get the papers out,' and on many occasions I have driven with him to help him deliver."

"When there are shenanigans in Haverhill, especially with our good friend Jim Fiorentini, Jack always tells the newsmakers to call us first ... and they do. Jack is always willing and eager to make phone calls, gets us exclusive access to political events that we are not usually welcomed at, and never hesitates to pitch in without being asked. For these and so many reasons, our 1st VP GW Ambassador award

AWARDS: PAGE 21

School Committeeman Refuses Standardized Testing for her Child

Amy Berard
EDUCATION COLUMNIST

In a 2016 memo, Massachusetts Education Commissioner Mitchell Chester explains, "We ask principals and test proctors to handle refusals with sensitivity. Students should not be pressured to take the test, nor should they be punished for not taking the test."

You read that correctly. You can refuse standardized testing for your child.

Locally, Lawrence School Committee Member and former Lawrence Public School District physical therapist, Dr. Marianela Rivera, decided to not have her Lawrence fourth grade student participate in MCAS testing this year. Dr. Rivera explains, "My son scored a perfect score in math and was also advanced in last year's MCAS. Over the past year, my son has been expressing is frustrations over the amount of testing he has to undergo and has mentioned that school isn't fun anymore."

Dr. Rivera is not the only local official concerned about over-testing. Citizens for Public Schools, along with teachers, parents, and other community members, have launched a statewide campaign to roll back high-stakes testing in Massachusetts.

Local legislators such as Senator Barbara L'Italien, Senator Pat Jehlen of Somerville, Representative Marjorie Decker of Cambridge, and Representative Mary Keefe of Worcester, have all filed bills this past summer for a moratorium on high-stakes testing and to affirm the right of parents to opt their children out of these tests.

The Citizens for Public Schools website adds, "Both state teachers unions, FairTest, and the Black Educators Alliance of Massachusetts are part of our campaign, along with parent groups, school committee members, superintendents, and principals."

This ever-growing movement of parents refusing standardized testing is both a local and national.

There are many different reasons a parent refuse standardized testing for their child. First, the anxiety level these tests may produce for a young child is of concern to many parents. In addition to this, parents of special education students and English language learners are concerned these tests are inappropriate for their children due to the lack of modifications and differentiations. Also, loss of precious instructional time is another concern of parents refusing standardized testing. Dr. Rivera adds, "I don't believe that it's developmentally appropriate to subject young students to extensive hours of standardized testing and practice for standardized testing. I also believe it's taking too much time out of actual learning. Testing is not instruction."

In addition to these reasons, many parents are refusing standardized testing as a way to protest the excessive abuse of standardized tests and the growing concern that schools are becoming more and more test-focused rather than student-focused. In fact, the refusal movement has led to changes in local testing policies in other states including New York – where the exploding refusal movement is strongest.

These tests and test simulations divert money away from direct student instruction and toward corporate profiteers and opportunists. MCAS and PARCC tests as well as test simulations such as Iready, MAP and Anet tests (often done quarterly and schoolwide for math and English) divert precious time away from direct instruction. Lessons become less about life, joy, curiosity, and individualized instruction and more about forcing each child to fit into a narrow mold.

Teaching to the tests creates an increase in behavior problems in some students. Students are being taught so far above their current abilities that they move beyond the "instructional level" and into what developmental psychologist, Lev Vygotsky, termed as the "frustration level."

Certain test-focused districts increase this frustration level by publicly posting in halls and classrooms student standardized test scores from Anet, Iready, MAP, MCAS, or PARCC – which not only shames students, but also is a violation of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act.

While passing the state high school test is a requirement for a diploma, there is no such requirement for students who whose parents refuse standardized testing in grades 3-8. If some schools use scores for choosing students for advanced work, they can easily use alterative assessments such as Anet, Iready, or MAP testing.

To refuse standardized testing, simply send your child's principal a brief letter like the one below:

"Dear —, I have asked my child, [name], not to take part in the [name the exam] this year. Please arrange for [him or her] to have a productive educational experience during the testing period."

You may also remind or have your child remind the faculty on test days, "My parent told me not to take this test."

Once a parent expresses his or her decision to refuse standardized testing, the Department of Secondary and Elementary Education may direct their child's principal to persuade the parent into reconsidering. However, it is still a parent's final decision to refuse testing. There are no penalties for students or parents who refuse testing.

For more information on the national standardized test refusal movement, visit fairtest.org

Kathy's Lawrence Notebook

Kathy Runge
LAWRENCE COLUMNIST

The Board of Registrars has washed its hands of the recalls and will leave it to the court to decide if any more signatures will be certified. The Foundation for Transparency in Government wants people who have been knowingly voting at an address other than where they live to have their signatures certified.

I have attended meetings of all three South Lawrence neighborhood associations this year and have not seen a Councilor-at-Large at any of them. I guess "at-Large" means North Lawrence.

At a recent Personnel Committee meeting, the Chief of Police was requested to attend specifically so Councilor Maldonado could ask him some questions, Mr. Maldonado was a no show and made the police chief wait a half hour after the scheduled start of the meeting before calling in with his apologies. That may have been payback for the police not giving him special treatment when he was stopped recently.

When a business goes into receivership, is that the time to appoint qualified people to the board of directors or does the management say hey, since we're in receivership let's appoint people with no experience at all? If the business is the Lawrence Public Schools and the City Council is appointing a person to the School Committee, you need not wonder who will get appointed.

The District A School Committee member resigned and the City Council promptly voted for the least qualified applicant to replace him. Emmanuel Castenada, a college student with no qualifications other than knowing students and former students in the school system, was chosen over Donna Bertolino, an education professional with a master's degree and over a decade of experience in education.

Councilor Almonte praised Castenada for working so hard on Election Day, handing out stickers to get people to vote for him. Almonte thinks he worked hard, since that's as hard as she works to get elected. Councilor Maldonado stated that if we had a School Committee with voting powers, of course he would have voted for the more qualified candidate. With that kind of thinking, the city will never get back control of the schools.

Here's the thing: If an unqualified person wants to be on the School Committee, and Lord knows that we have had enough of them, the way to do it is to pull nomination papers and put yourself out there for a few months so people can get to know you. If Mr. Castenada had done that he probably would have won the election, as no one else bothered to get on the ballot. If the selection of a School Committee member comes before the council, in my

LAWRENCE: PAGE 23

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Lawrence High seniors Thu Dang and Kevin Venderhost received a total of $600 each in scholarships from The Valley Patriot thanks to our sponsors, advertisers, BASH attendees and readers.

Two LHS Seniors Win Valley Patriot Scholarship

The Valley Patriot granted two $600 scholarships at the 12th Anniversary BASH last month thanks to the sponsors and advertisers of the paper.

Valley Patriot publisher Tom Duggan told the crowd that originally the scholarship award was $400, "but thanks to our platinum sponsors Kevin Leach, Joe Zingales of Team Zingales-Remax and Mike Agricola, owner of Salvatore's Restaurant in Lawrence, we are increasing the award tonight to $500. Also, we got a check from our good friend John Saro of Pentucket Medical whom I know this table of veterans over here know well, because he takes care of our veterans, he wrote us a check made out to the Lawrence High School Alumni Associaion for $200 so tonight we are adding $100 to each student's scholarship for books."

The Lawrence High School Jr. ROTC presented colors as the room quieted down and Chris Eldredge of the Lawrence High School Alumni Association took the microphone.

"Five years ago, I called up Tommy and I said hey the Lawrence High School

LHS: PAGE 19

IN YOUR CORNER WITH SENATOR KATY IVES

Protecting Consumers from Fraud

Kathleen O'Connor Ives
MASSACHUSETTS STATE SENATOR

Recently, the State Senate unanimously, and in a bipartisan fashion, passed a bill I filed to protect consumers from unknowingly entering a credit contract and to limit instances of fraud resulting from the mailing of unsolicited and often predatory loans.

Every day, residents across Massachusetts find what appear to be normal checks in their mailboxes for large sums of money with their names on it. When cashed, these checks activate a high-interest consumer loan. These loans have been known by other names, including "instant loan checks," and "live checks," and they most often take the form of a check or other negotiable instrument with routing numbers, account numbers, and all the standard features of a regular check.

Many immediately tear up these checks out of justified suspicion. Some unwittingly cash the checks during times of financial desperation. Still others discover someone else fraudulently cashed a check in their name only after reading a tarnished credit report.

Senate Bill 2194 "An Act Relative to Unsolicited Loans," is a commonsense measure to protect consumers from predatory lending and identity fraud. This legislation prohibits banks, mortgage lenders, or any other entity from issuing an unsolicited negotiable check, money order, or other instrument that can be used to activate a loan. An exception is made in cases where a financial institution advances credit to a customer with whom they have a preexisting relationship. The bill also removes liability for debts incurred if a party other than the addressee fraudulently cashes a loan check.

In the event of such an unauthorized use of an unsolicited loan instrument, the issuing institution would provide the addressee with a written statement releasing them of liability from the debt and would take steps to repair any adverse effect to their credit rating as a result of the unauthorized use.

Additionally, anyone who cashes an unsolicited loan check without understanding the terms and conditions buried in the legalese that accompany the check has the right to rescind the credit contract within ten days of cashing the check by notifying the lender and returning the loan amount in full.

A financial institution that improperly sends an unsolicited loan instrument may face a fine of up to $5,000 for each violation, and a party that engages in an unauthorized use of a loan check may be punished by up to five years in state prison or be issued a fine of up to $25,000.

The bill now moves to the Massachusetts House of Representatives for their consideration.

Senator O'Connor Ives can be reached at KATHLEEN.OCONNORIVES@MASENATE.GOV.

State Fines Lantigua for Refusing to Disclose Campaign Finance Activity ... Again. Still Owes from Previous Fine

Tom Duggan
VALLEY PATRIOT PUBLISHER

Mayor Willie Lantigua with his trusted adviser, Milagros Dominguez, AKA Dirma Espada (who was recently convicted of Medicare fraud) overseeing the recount procedure against Dan Rivera in 2013.

Former Lawrence Mayor Willie Lantigua is in trouble again with the Massachusetts Office of Campaign and Political Finance (OCPF). The state's political watchdog agency has fined Lantigua another $1,875 (as of 4-3-16) for refusing to file his 2015 year-end, campaign finance reports with the state. The reports were due on January 20, 2016.

According to Massachusetts State Law, candidates who do not file on time must be fined $25 per day, for each day after the deadline, capping the fine at $5,000.

The law also states that campaign fines must be paid by the individual. Campaign finance money must not be used to pay these fines.

According to records at the Massachusetts Secretary of State's Office, former Mayor Lantigua was fined the maximum of $5,000 last year for refusing to file the legally required mid-year, campaign finance reports. The reports were due on June 30, 2015. According to state records, Lantigua has not paid that fine nor has he made any effort to file the legally mandated reports.

As of the date of this report, Lantigua owes the state a total $6,875, but that number is still rising at $25 per day until it stops at $10,000 ($5,000 for each report due).

Campaign finance reports are legal documents on which the candidate must declare the amount of money taken in from donations, fund-raisers, etc., as well as all campaign expenses and bank activity. Candidates must also list the names, addresses and employers of those who made donations to the campaign, the amount donated, and the name of the donor's employer.

Last year, OCPF sent a letter to Lantigua notifying him that he had not yet turned over the mandatory mid-year campaign reports, warning him that he had already accrued $3,425 in fines at that time.

If Lantigua refuses to pay the current fines against him, Attorney General Maura Healey can either charge him criminally, or sue him civilly as prior AG Martha Coakley did once before.

LANTIGUA'S HISTORY OF ILLEGAL CAMPAIGN ACTIVITY

Former Lawrence Mayor and former State Representative William Lantigua has had a long sordid history of refusing to disclose campaign activity, donations, and expenses to the state.

Lantigua was sued in 2013, by Attorney General Martha Coakley and the Office of Campaign and Political Finance for committing several campaign finance law violations, including accepting several thousands of dollars in potentially illegal cash and corporate contributions.

Also in 2013, Lantigua campaign worker, Justo Garcia was indicted as a city worker (hired by Lantigua). Garcia was charged with stealing money from the city's parking garages and depositing the money directly into Lantigua's campaign account.

According to OCPF records, in 2009 Lantigua "either received or failed to report as expenditures or unpaid liabilities four potentially illegal contributions from Rumbo Newspaper in the form of advertisements."

In 2010, the mayor received or failed to report close to $5,000 in contributions from 60 Island Street, LLC in the form of food and beverage and room rental fees.

Lantigua also failed to report nearly $20,000 worth of expenditures from his campaign account during 2009, including a more than $9,000 payment to Costa Eagle Radio for advertising.

Charges were filed against Lantigua who agreed that because of "previous inaccurate campaign finance disclosures," he would adhere to an "enhanced reporting schedule with OCPF" during 2009, but failed to meet the deadlines for three reporting periods, including; Jan. 1 to April 30, 2009, May 1 to Aug. 31, 2009 and Jan. 1 to Dec. 31, 2009.

In addition to being filed late, all three financial disclosures were also "inaccurate, incomplete or unsigned."

In January 2013, AG Coakley and OCPF sued Lantigua for failing to file a 2011 campaign finance report. Lantigua later paid a $5,000 civil fine and filed the missing report.

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THE VALLEY PATIOT AROUND THE WORLD: Dr. Gomer of Mount Vernon Dental Associates on South Broadway in Lawrence took his Valley Patriot along with him on vacation last month to Reykjavik, Iceland. Take your Valley Patriot with you when you travel and send us a picture to valleypatriot@aol.com

State Senator Babs L'Italien (who blew off our BASH again this year) was all smiles at a fundraiser for Dracut Selectman Tony Archinski last week. Archinski is seeking reelection this month.

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Congratulations to The Valley Patriot on your 150th Edition and your 12th Anniversary!

For 12 years and 150 published editions, The Valley Patriot newspaper has proven to be the paper of record for news, opinions, and events in Massachusetts and NH. THANK YOU for featuring our hero veterans on the front page every month, and thank you for all you do for our police officers and firefighters. They appreciate what you do, and I do as well.

Lowell City Councilor and Former Lowell Mayor ...

~ Rodney Elliott

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A Community Steps Out For Valley Patriot's 12th Anniversary!

PHOTO: RICH RUSSELL

PHOTO: GERARD MAGUIRE

At left: MTV's Brittany Baldi (now with the Herald) stands back as Hollywood star Steve Blackwood surprises the crowd singing "Fever" before giving out the college scholarships. At right: Valley Patriot Goodwill Ambassador Award winner Jack Roy has a little fun with North Andover Police Sgt. Dan Lanen, who won the Officer Tom Duggan, Sr. Public Safety Award.

PHOTO: RICH RUSSELL

PHOTO: RICH RUSSELL

Above left: Methuen State Rep. Diana DiZoglio joined the incredible B Street Bombers who headlined the Valley Patriot BASH. At Right: Methuen School Committeeman Nick DiZoglio poses for a selfie with Steve Blackwood and Brittany Baldi.

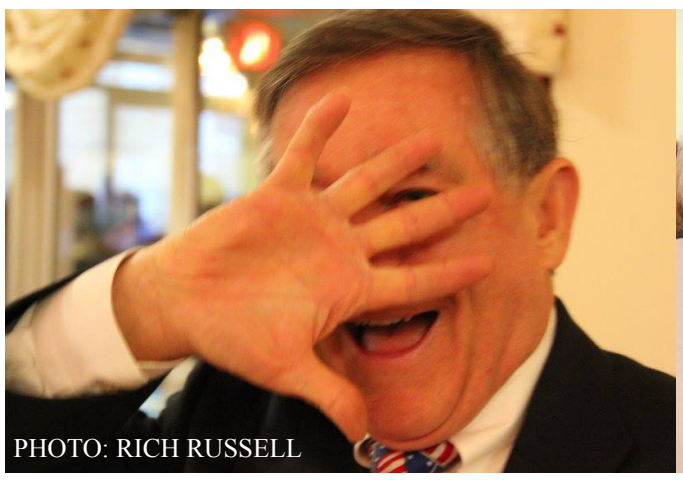
PHOTO: RICH RUSSELL

PHOTO: RICH RUSSELL

Fresh out of witness protection, Kevin Leach gives his famous press pose as he is introduced as a $1,000 platinum sponsor of the BASH. Middle Photo: Methuen City Councilor Jen Kannan with Eva Montabello and former Methuen Councilor Debbie Quinn Deschene. At right: Valley Patriot publisher Tom Duggan presents famous weatherman Al Kaprielian with his Wachusett Sour Cream and Onion Potato Chips before the festivities began.

PHOTOS: RICH RUSSELL

Left photo: Valley Patriot PuppyGirl Kate Whitney Grossman chats it up with last year's Valley Patriot President's Award winner, and frequent Valley Patriot columnist Alex Talcott. Middle photo: Valley Patriot columnist and former president o the Greater Boston Tea Party, Christine Morabito, with our favorite weatherman Al Kaprielian. Photo right: Valley Patriot publisher Tom Duggan's family: Frank Incropera, Jen Incropera, Caleb Incropera and Dorothy Duggan Incropera.

PHOTOS: GERARD MAGUIIRE

Left photo: Valley Patriot PuppyGirl Kate Whitney Grossman. Middle photo: "Paying Attention" Singer Melvern Taylor. Photo right: Methuen Police Chief Joe Solomon and Methuen East End Councilor Tom Ciulla.

Ye Gay Ol' Valley

Pansexuals and Pronouns

Dani B. Langiven
VALLEY PATRIOT LESBIAN COLUMNIST

I was at a wedding shower the other day sitting with several family members. The evening before when I couldn't sleep I realized that all four nieces on my side of the family have degrees in some form of social work. At the table, was one of those nieces who is a high school guidance counselor. I asked her how work was and after filling me in a bit began to tell me about a freshman "girl" who had recently came out of the closet, considers "herself" sexually fluid, and has asked to be referred to as "they" rather than her, she, he, or him. They don't identify themselves with a pronoun that conjures images or thoughts of male and/or female, nor do they identify their sexual inclinations because they see themselves as one who is attracted to the person and not the biological sex, which is known as being pansexual.

I consider myself fairly liberal and progressively minded. In fact, according to one of those ridiculous FaceBook tests you can take at three o'clock in the morning when you can't sleep, I am 21% conservative and 79% liberal. Even so, I was having trouble wrapping that 79% of my lesbian liberal brain around being referred to as they and the term pansexual. So, I looked it up on the Internet, as we all do these days when we have questions. The definition of pansexual is: not limited in sexual choice with regard to biological sex, gender, or gender identity. In essence, it is another or new term for bisexual. With that being said, however, apparently, pansexuals get their panties or boxer briefs in a bunch if you refer to them as bisexual. But isn't that what they are? If one can be attracted to the same AND opposite sex then that is bisexual. Maybe I'm getting old. Maybe with that statement, I just bumped myself up to being 22% conservative. I can deal with the pansexual/bisexual terminology. It's the fluidity of pronouns that I'm having difficulty with.

The English language is already a poop show. It's not easy to learn; it's not easy to teach; it's not easy to speak. There are so many words that become confusing to even the highest level of thinkers. Case in point: what do I mean when I say revolution? It all depends on whether you are sitting in a science or history class. Good thing history isn't important in public schools. Students will only need to learn that revolution is moving in a circular course. How about the words through, bough, and rough? They all end in the same four letters, but are pronounced differently. Then it comes the this family: their, they're, and there. These are already a struggle for most students and many adults, now we have to attach individual sensitivities to them? It's enough to make an English professor's head explode.

I'm ranting, as I like to do, however, I am also struggling because I'm trying to be the open minded liberal that I pride myself to be, but some times the rapid pace of change and what it means to be sexual human beings is just too fast to keep up with. I'm having a mini-nightmare because I fear that, at some point, people will evolve into always referring to themselves in the third person; a practice that I hate.

"Dani is having a difficult time with referring to a single individual as they," said Dani. "Dani also does not see the difference between being pansexual and bisexual. Can Harry explain to Dani how they are different?" asked Dani of Harry.

Returning to my niece's high school freshman, I asked how they dress. I was curious to know if they leaned toward a more traditionally masculine or feminine wardrobe. In my mind, I assumed they leaned toward a more masculine. I was informed that they wear baggy clothes to hide any hint of a biological sexual identity. Interesting. I'm going to assume that most people will, in turn, assume when this person is out in public that they are of masculine persuasion and will refer to them as sir or young man. I'm curious how they will react. Will they be inclined to educate the person who is making and assumptive infraction of how this person identifies? Will their reaction hinge upon what strength they have on any given day to face a justifiable ignorance and uneducated insensitivity? Part of me really wants to find out who they are and shadow them for a week or two to see what their life is like and how they react to other's reactions to them.

Regarding pronouns, my niece who is also a progressive liberal asked her three year old daughter what pronoun she would prefer to be addressed as. My very precocious grand niece looked at her mother quite seriously and said, "Cow." Funny, but, I'm curious to know if, at some point, someone will identify

PRONOUNS: PAGE 18

Beneath the Surface

How to Interpret the Constitution... and the Bible

Paul Murano
VALLEY PATRIOT COLUMNIST

As the debate heats up about whether President Obama has a right to replace late Supreme Court justice Antonin Scalia before his term ends in January, it is important to consider where the ideological divide lies on how to interpret the Constitution. It is no coincidence that this disagreement parallels the same debate on how to interpret the Bible.

In both cases, people choose one of three basic ways to interpret the written word from a bygone era. As regards the Constitution, these methods are commonly known as constructionalism, originalism, and seeing the Constitution as a living-breathing document. These parallel the three interpretive modalities of Sacred Scripture: fundamentalism, originalism, and modernism. Let's look at what these terms mean, and why different people tend to lean toward one mode of interpretation.

The two extremes of scriptural and constitutional interpretation, fundamentalism and modernism, are flip sides of each other. They are the same but opposite in that they insist on interpreting the text with a 21st century (or current) cultural mindset - without taking into consideration the original intent of the author. They are different in that fundamentalism (or constructionalism for the Constitution) "updates" the words to mean what they mean literally in our language today, while modernism does the same "updating" with the meaning of the words to fit preconceived notions of what is 'acceptable' today. This is why fundamentalists cling to a literal interpretation of the creation story while modernists reject Jesus' miracles as mythical fiction. With this foundational error - that the text and meaning must conform to current cultural standards - both of these interpretive options are fatally flawed.

The third, or middle concept, originalism, on the other hand seeks to understand the meaning of the text from the perspective of the original authors. It does this through textual, cultural, and historical scholarship. Originalists understand that neither the Bible nor of the Constitution were meant to be translated through the filter of contemporary western cultural standards.

On interpretation of the Bible, the Catholic Church has always rejected both fundamentalism and modernism. On interpretation of the Constitution, prominent Catholic judges like Scalia, Alito, and Thomas, have also rejected constructionalism and modernism. Why is this? What is it about the Catholic world view that leads to accepting originalism as the only way to interpret older texts while the rest of the world fights between the false extremes of fundamentalism and modernism? Let us go beneath the surface to discern this phenomenon.

First, originalism presumes there are essential truths to the identity of a thing - truths we cannot change. Second, it is the responsibility, therefore, of contemporary culture to conform to these truths rather than these truths conform to contemporary culture. Those who believe in fundamentalist or modernist interpretations of the Constitution or the Bible implicitly believe reality must conform to them, not them to reality. As essential truths of our nation can be found in the original meaning conveyed by the framers of the Constitution, so too are essential truths about life found in the original meaning conveyed through the sacred authors of the Bible. A fundamentalist or modernist approach to either does violence to the text.

Therefore, since only originalist judges respect the nation's essential identity and can ensure its organic union and growth into the future, and since leftists like President Obama and half the current Supreme Court do not understand this, it is imperative for the sake of the nation that the next president choose Justice Scalia's replacement.

Paul Murano teaches philosophy at Rivier University and North Shore Community College and is host of Beneath the Surface radio show on WCAP, Mondays 10-11pm. Podcasts available at facebook.com/fellowtruthseekers. Paul teaches adult enrichment at St. Patrick's in Nashua, is founder of Heartbeat Pregnancy Help center in Burlington, and is a singer-songwriter-musician. E-mail Paul at PJDM@aol.com

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The *PULSE!*

They're Coming to Lowell! Are Syrian "Refugees" A Terrorist Trojan Horse?

John MacDonald
VALLEY PATRIOT LOWELL COLUMNIST

For generations Lowell, Massachusetts has been a city in America that is known to willingly accept immigrants from around the world. Immigrants built the city, lived here and often became successful. Legal immigrants made huge positive contributions as they assimilated to the city and the United States of America. Over the last few years we have seen a new influx of immigrants come to the country with less of a desire to assimilate and with much more of an emphasis to bring their culture here and instead of integration, cluster into private pocket societies from wherever they originally came from. The United States immigration policies have become laxer and even accepting of illegal immigrants or just flat out ignoring the immigration laws that are already in place.

Now as the world has watched the Syrian refugee crisis spread across Europe and trickle into other parts of the world, we here in Lowell have been left with the question as to when our city must contribute to the settling of these new Syrian refugees? According to a local news source, one Syrian refugee family has already settled in Lowell and with only a two-week notice at some point, more Syrian refugees will arrive courtesy of the Federal government.

Folks, I am the son of a legal immigrant. I would not be here today if legal immigration to the United States did not exist. My father came from Canada legally in the 1960's. Back in the 1960's immigration and an opportunity to become a United States citizen did not come easily as it does today. You see the people who ran the government in those days, were much more responsible and dedicated to a vision of making American a better place. My father had to be sponsored by a citizen of the United States. He had to be gainfully employed, he had to pay his taxes and volunteer to serve his new country in the National Guard. Willingly and gratefully my father did his part. You will find no one prouder to be an American than my father. Since he took his oath of citizenship, my father worked hard for forty years, became a proud union man, got married, helped raise a family, retired and has voted in every local, state and federal election since.

Call me crazy if you wish, but because my father had to contribute to his new country and that citizenship didn't come easily as it does today; as a result, he feels more connected, patriotic and proud of the United States. Unlike many who are coming here today illegally and some legally, those whom are given free benefits, benefits that people who are naturally born here don't usually ever receive. People where nothing is asked from, nothing is asked for and nothing is contributed back to the country that is offering opportunity. Sorry for those with a bleeding heart… I think it's wrong.

We have watched terrorism over the last couple of years explode in Europe, due to the influx of un-assimilated pro-Islamic immigrant populations. Now that we have seen regular terrorist attacks here in the United States and mostly from extremist Islamic terrorists; I must ask why we are going to be forced to welcome Syrian refugees into Lowell? Syrian refugees that are proven to have ties with terrorism and extremist pro-Islamic views. Why are we inviting Jihad to the United States and in Lowell? Why must we play Russian roulette with our lives and the lives of our children?

I know as some people read this they are saying… where's your compassion? What about the children? Where's the love?

LOWELL: PAGE27

Bipartisan Legislation Passed Tough Issues Ahead

Linda Dean Campbell
STATE REPRESENTATIVE, 15TH ESSEX

Students from Methuen and Haverhill (L-R) Madeline Coady, Ryan Hamilton, Nyomi White and Benjamin Roy joined me in the House Chamber during a break from their day on Beacon Hill. Students from around the State participated in crafting legislation on topics that affected them directly.

Recently, we saw the bipartisan approval by the Massachusetts House of a bill to fund local municipal road and bridge repair. Additionally, Governor Baker has requested more money for local bridge repair, which will require an additional appropriation. As a member of the Committee on Ways and Means, I can tell you that while this spending certainly is necessary, it will require a reduction of other State spending to finance it as there is no federal support. Pulling monies from other appropriations will involve both considerable some homework and debate.

Governor Baker recently signed a measure we sent to him that repeals a 1989 law which automatically suspends drivers' licenses for all drug offenses for five years, whether related to driving in any way or not.

The revised law approved by Governor Baker would not apply to individuals engaged in trafficking drugs, or to those that are found driving while impaired by drugs. Individuals caught committing these crimes will still face appropriate consequences, both criminal and administrative, for their actions.

The automatic suspensions for individuals who have been charged and convicted of non-violent drug crimes has made their rehabilitation, something already difficult to achieve, harder to accomplish. This past impediment to resumption of a normal life is very much against most everyone's great desire that all of these individuals beat their addiction, get their lives back on track, and are both safe and productive members of our community.

I agree with the Governor and both my Democratic and Republican colleagues that this repeal increases the likelihood of positive end results, fewer repeat offenders, and less deaths from overdose.

The Legislature also passed unanimously a bill to fund improvements for municipal roads and bridges. It will bring approximately 1.18 million dollars to help repair potholes and repair streets in Methuen and over 1.5 million dollars to Haverhill. I see this not only as necessary for commuters who need the certainty that the road they take to work will not be damaged, but also as a public safety issue.

I applaud my colleagues for continuing to work together in a bipartisan manner to pass legislation that improves the lives of families and individuals throughout the Merrimack Valley and the Commonwealth and I look forward to doing so as we continue to tackle tough issues that confront our state.

The current debates on-going regarding the expansion of Charter Schools and the legalization of marijuana are more challenging and I hope that you will contact me and offer your perspectives on both of these potential ballot questions.

Representative Campbell serves as Vice Chair of the Committee on Public Safety and Homeland Security and also on the Committee on Ways and Means. She can be reached at 617.722.2430/Linda.Campbell@MA house.gov or representative.lindacampbell@gmail.com/978.989.0722

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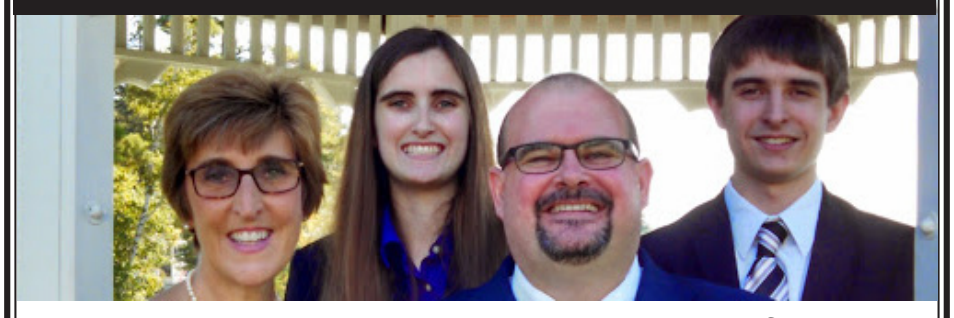

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IN THE GROOVE with Cindy Annis

CHICAGO

The next artist in the groove comes from Chicago, Illinois. In 1967, students of DePaul University, Walter Parazaider, Terry Kath, Danny Seraphine, James Pankow, and Lee Longnane got together to start a group with Robert Lamm from Roosevelt University called The Big Thing. The famous Peter Cetera joined the group soon after.

The Big Thing got their start singing covers of songs. James William Guercio, their producer, encouraged the band to move to Los Angeles. There, they got a recording contract with Columbia records. In 1968, they released their first album of original songs under the name Chicago Transit Authority. When the train and bus station that was also called Chicago Transit Authority found out about the band, they took legal action. The group shortened its name to Chicago.

Chicago was a successful group. The mixture of rock n' roll and jazz gave them 49 top 40 records. Later in their career, they recorded some amazing soft rock songs.

The logo for most of the groups' albums was inspired by the Coca-Cola Company. The fancy cursive logo was designed by John Berg. He was the art director for the Columbia and CBS record company. Nick Fasciano took the sketch that John made, and created the memorable logo.

In 1970, Chicago came out with an album called "Chicago II". Like most of their albums, Chicago II was released as a double LP. Three great songs came out of the album. They are "Colour My World", "Make Me Smile", and "25 or 6 to 4". Most of their albums were Chicago with a roman numeral. There are a few exceptions such as Chicago Live at Carnegie Hall and Chicago 13. In 1977, their last top 10 song sung by Peter Cetera called "Baby What a Big Surprise" came out of Chicago XI. Tragically, on January 23, 1978 guitarist Terry Kath died from an accidental gunshot wound.

When the 1980s came, so did many changes. Columbia records dropped Chicago in 1980. In 1981, Warner Brother's records picked up Chicago. David Foster

became their new producer. The sound of Chicago as fans knew it was forever changed. Foster, would move the brass section to the back and the vocals to the front. In Chicago 16, members of the group Toto were brought into the studio to record with Chicago. "Hard to Say I'm Sorry" used a synthesizer and no brass instruments.

Chicago is still recording music today. Some of the band members have been changed. With the changing of group members, the sound of Chicago has also changed a little. Chicago can be found on record labels such as Columbia, Warner Brothers, Full Moon, Rhino, Reprise, Balkanton, and Melodiya.

Like most music groups and solo artists, Chicago did receive some awards. In 1977 as well as 1986, they won the American Music Award for best pop group. In 1976, Chicago won a Grammy award for best vocal performance on their #1 song "If You Leave Me Now". It took until 2016 for Chicago to be inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame.

Tune into Cindy's Vinyl Vault all this month for our featured Artist of the Month. We go live Sunday night at 10pm until midnight, Monday night 11pm until midnight, and Wednesday night 9pm until 12pm on AM 980 WCAP. During every show, you are invited to call in a request or dedication at 978-454-4980. Join our Facebook page at www.facebook.com/cindysvinylvault. There, you'll be able to listen to past shows. If you would like to send us an email our address is cindysvinylvault@gmail.com. So until next month, remember it's not how old it is, but how great it sounds.

For Minute to Minute BREAKING NEWS
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TV TALK WITH BILL CUSHING

Billions Is Worth Your Investment

Bill Cushing
VALLEY PATRIOT TV COLUMNIST

Showtime's newest drama, Billions, is a fastly-paced series that centers on the battle between charismatic hedge fund kingpin Bobby Axelrod (Damian Lewis) and "win at all costs" U.S. attorney Chuck Rhoades (Paul Giamatti) who is obsessed with bringing down Axelrod and his firm, Axe Capital, for insider trading.

Both Bobby's and Chuck's wives also play major roles. Chuck's wife Wendy (Maggie Siff) is Axe Capital's in-house therapist. She has known Axelrod for many years prior to her marriage to Chuck. This obviously is a huge sticking point for Chuck and Wendy's marriage, and also for Bobby and Wendy's work relationship. After all, can Bobby trust her while her husband is trying to put Bobby in jail? Can Chuck expect Wendy to be supportive of him, while still working for Bobby? Bobby's wife, Lara (Malin Akerman) can be just as intense as her husband. She is not going to let anyone hurt her family and what they built.

At times you don't know who to root for, if there is anyone. Do you root for Bobby, the guy who built up his wealth and career from virtually nothing? Or do you root for Chuck, the guy trying to destroy Bobby? Like Bobby says in the pilot, "When did it become a crime to succeed in this country?" But as we come to find out through the course of the season, there is a lot to dislike about Bobby and how he got to where he is today.

The show really has no real heroes. Bobby and Chuck are very much alike. They both are calculating, manipulative guys that will stop at nothing in pursuit of their own personal goals and they don't care who gets in their way of achieving them. They are characters that you love to hate.

The terminology of Billions is that of a complex, high level financial world, and can sometimes make the show a little convoluted. But the writers do a good job at helping those who are unfamiliar with this world understand.

The series has some of the best acting on TV this year. The scenes between Giamatti and Lewis are pure gold. You can feel the tension when they share the screen, and it's riveting. But it's not just them. The supporting cast is excellent as well. Breaking Bad's David Costabile is excellent as Bobby's right hand man, Mike "Wags" Wagner, more or less the chief enforcer of Axe Capital.

Billions is enjoyable in many ways with lots of interwoven stories and its soap opera-ish type storylines. Is Chuck really interested in justice? Or is he just out to make a name for himself? Is Axlerod really a man of the people? After all, he was the only member of his company to

TV TALK: PAGE 27

PRONOUNS: FROM 16

themselves as feeling more like a particular animal than a human and asked to be referred to as such.

I think the young student my niece is helping and those who have like feelings must some times feel very lonely and frightened. On the other hand, they are also incredibly brave. While I am uncertain about the fluid use of pronouns and confused about new sexual terminology, I do hope they have the support they need to etch their place in society. They, too, deserve the right find happiness and love so that they can focus on being the person they were meant to be and the contributing citizen they have the right to be.

Bottom line: I may not "get it", but I can respect it and value them all as people.

Dani Langevin is a teacher and has a Bachelors in Fine Art and Masters in Education. She has written four young adult novels, one of which is self-published. You can email Dani at DaniBLangevin@aol.com

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LHS SCHOLARSHIP: FROM 11

Alumni Association is having its annual banquet," Endlredge said. "'We would like you to come and cover the event.' He said, 'What do you do?' I said, 'we have dinner for the scholarship winners and their families and we give out scholarships. He said 'OK.'"

"Then he said, 'wait a minute'. I heard some rummaging around in the background, and he said 'Hey, I just scraped up $100, can I get a scholarship?' I said, 'sure.'"

"So, Tommy came and he gave the scholarship, and the winner was so happy that he got $100 from Tommy that he sent Tommy his transcripts after his first semester. I thought that was great. These kids are so grateful. So, Tom told me after, 'I'm gonna keep doing this every year, and if I can, I'm going to raise the amount I give each year.' The next year we had another winner and he gave $200. Now tonight, 5 years later, apparently he's giving two scholarships for $400 each, and he just raised it to $500, maybe $600. So thank you very much Tommy!"

"When I asked Tommy that first year, I said well, what are you looking for in a student. I asked, 'do you want a journalism major?' He said 'no.' 'Do you want somebody with great grades?' He said 'no.' I asked, 'what are you looking for?' He said, 'I want somebody who stands out, that the teachers, and the administrators respect, someone that the other students look up to. I want a kid who works hard and is creative and someone people look up to.'"

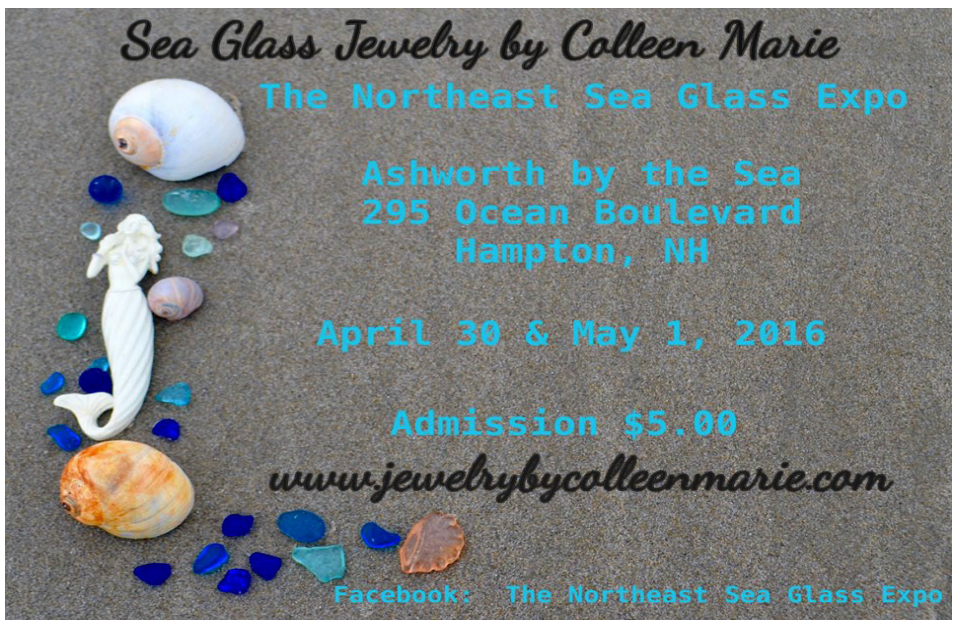
"So, what we have been doing for the last five years is calling the administration at Lawrence High, this year we spoke with Tim Finn, the Assistant Headmaster, and we found our two winners."

"Tonight I'm going to tell you about them."

"Kevin Vanderhorst is a senior in the Math, Science and Technology High School at Lawrence High. He moved to Lawrence from the Dominican Republic 2 years ago with his parents for a better educational opportunity. He has immersed himself in his academics and sports, specifically basketball, among other activities. Since Kevin's arrival to Lawrence High School, he has managed to maintain excellent grades earning a GPA of 3.8 due in part to his hard work but mainly because of his intelligence and motivation. He is a role model and is well liked by his teachers and his peers. Kevin will be the first in his family to attend college and looks forward to a successful future in the field of Business Administration."

"Thu Dang came from Vietnam with her mother when she was three years old. Thu will be studying Food Science at Framingham State University in the fall. Here at Lawrence High School, Thu is part of the Yearbook Staff, Prom Committee, Student Council and the Girl Scouts. Thu is also a part of the Youth Development Organization here in the city and taught middle schoolers about nutrition during the Science Olympiad. She would like to work for a non-profit organization that teaches children about nutrition and taking care of themselves."

"And I never thought I would be reading this in a high school bio, but, Thu is a great role model when it comes to eating healthy, because she can often be seen eating fruit and sipping on a green smoothie with chia seeds."



TEEN TALK WITH ANA DEBERNARDO

The Concept of Hell

Ana Debernardo
VALLEY PATRIOT TEEN TALK COLUMNIST

Throughout the history of human existence, the concept of "hell" has sparked intrigue in both great and humble minds alike. Our need to know what lies beyond life is an obsession bordering on addiction. The idea that there might exist a place where the damned will suffer eternally for their sins is terrorizing, and whether we admit it or not, this idea haunts our unconscious. What makes hell even more intriguing to the mortal mind? The fact that no one may know for sure if it really exists, or exactly what it is like. For this reason, generations of people have attempted to explore the mysteries of the Underworld through books, epic poems, movies, and personal meditation. As for myself, I know what "life" would be like in my personal hell.

Images of fire and brimstone flood our perception of hell. Although it is undeniable that an eternal stay in this furnace would be torture enough, I believe that the punishment extends even further. To never again experience the simple joys of laughter, song, and dance; to experience the loss of a sense of self; and most importantly, to lose bonds with family and friends, would in my opinion, be a whole new degree of hell.

Coming from a very tight-knit community, both within my family and in an academic and social setting, I cannot imagine going any amount of time (not to mention eternity) without the support of family and friends. The ability to foster meaningful relationships is what truly sets human beings apart from the rest of creation. Even before birth, a relationship molds our existence. As fetuses we have a dependency on our mothers. Then, as babies (in most cases), special bonds are formed with both of our parents. As time progresses and we mature, we start to be introduced to extended family and friends. When the time is right, one develops the ultimate relationship with a "significant other". At this point, the circle is poised to repeat itself. Our innate need to connect ourselves with other members of the human race stimulates us and allows us to function properly in society.

My English teacher of four years prides herself on asking questions in her classroom that her students would not normally consider elsewhere. The other day, she asked why we, as a society, condone the euthanasia of animals, but not of people. How can it be that in the case of the former, this science can be seen as a humane, compassionate option which is intended to put our beloved animals out of their misery, but the minute a human being taking his or her own life enters the debate, even for health reasons, the stereotypical response (from the traditional Christian viewpoint) almost immediately warns against the dangers of hell. The reason for this is actually quite logical when put into perspective. The Christian belief holds that human beings are elevated high above the rest of creation in the eyes of God for the reason that we are made in His own image and likeness, and from Him does our dignity derive. I understand not everyone believes this, and this ability to choose is absolute proof of our esteemed worth in the sight of God. This is the reason why we can put our pets down without hesitation, should they be in a state of unbearable suffering, but we can never even entertain the idea of putting our own expiration dates on our lives.

Of course, I enjoy quality "alone time" as much as the next person, but to be alone forever would be a nightmare. This is not me condemning everyone who considers or has considered cutting their life short. But I would just like to point out something I've learned about earthly suffering.

Someone once told me that suffering is God's way of letting us share in His own sacrifice on the cross. For God to look at you, and consider you strong enough to endure a certain battle is something that can be seen as a privilege if you choose to look at it with optimism. Now, before you start thinking I am a masochist for saying something so absurd, actually take a minute to think about it. Would you prefer a permanent solution to a temporary problem, or will you be motivated by the hope that things will get better. Because things always do get better, no matter how bad they are at their worst. If cloudy skies haven't cleared, you can be certain it's not the end until the rainbow appears.

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God's Grace is Greater Than Your Sin!

Peter Larocque
VALLEY PATRIOT COLUMNIST

John 1:19, reads as follows, "For the law [the 10 Commandments] was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ." Notice grace and truth are on the side of Jesus Christ while the law is on the side of Moses. The Scriptures make it very clear that God's Grace cannot be separated from Jesus Christ. Actually, one could say that they are one in the same. With the coming of Jesus Christ, God's Grace was unleashed. Therefore Grace is not just a subject or a teaching or a message in God's Word the Bible, it is the person of Jesus Christ. Take a look at Romans 6:14, here we see that when we became believers, God placed us under His Grace; sin has no more dominion over us! On the other hand, if we insist on keeping ourselves under the law [meaning the 10 Commandments, which we all have failed to live by], sin therefore prevails because the law is the strength [the power] of sin according to 1 Corinthians 15:56.

The law was never meant to justify or make one righteous in God's sight which we read about in Romans 3:20-25,"Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin.(21) But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested being witnessed by the law and the prophets;(22) Even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference; (23) For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God: (24) Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: (25) Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation[a full payment] through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past through the forbearance of God;"

When we believe on Jesus Christ, surrendering our lordship to him, making him the Lord of our lives, believing we have the forgiveness of all our sins, past, present and future, by his blood, we become the Righteousness of God in Christ by his Grace, which is His Undeserved, Unmerited and Unearned Favor toward us!

The above verses and statement describe what the Finished Work of Jesus Christ on the Cross accomplished and has made available to us as His Church.

God's Grace is bigger, deeper, wider and more powerful than all the world's sins put together. Sin is something you do. Guilt is something you feel. Shame, Disappointment or Humiliation are things you carry. Condemnation, whether it is condemning yourself or receiving the condemnation from others, counts you out, it disqualifies, making you unfit for use like a condemned house.

Can you NOW see how powerful living with a consciousness of Jesus' forgiveness can be?

2 Peter 1:9 says, "But he that lacketh these things is blind and cannot see afar off…" Lacketh what things? The things in the previous verses, faith, virtue, knowledge, temperance, patience, godliness, brotherly kindliness, and finally charity [love].Verse 9 goes on to give us the reason one lacks these things and is blind which is that he has "forgotten that he was purged [forgiven and cleansed] from his old sins." But on the other hand, if one is continually conscious of God's forgiveness, the way is made clear for these things to be in you and abound, "neither will you be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ."

Knowing what Jesus Christ accomplished on the cross when He said, "it is finished" the offering of the one perfect sacrifice for sins forever was completed! Then God our Father says, "And their sins and iniquities will I remember no more! Hebrews 10:12, 17. I have asked this question before and it bears repeating, if God All Mighty remembers our sins no more, why should we? Oh how I wish people could simply read what is written!

There's an old long standing traditional belief among some if not most Christians that when one dies and goes to Heaven he or she will enter a special room with the Largest Big Screen Television ever made and everybody will be able to see every bad thought and every bad action that they lived displayed on this screen and then have to give an account to God for them. How stupid and how wrong and devilish this teaching is, because we just read that once we get saved, all our sins are remembered by God No MORE!

Sin therefore has no dominion over your life when you are under grace. Sin cannot take root in your life when you are established in God's Forgiveness. Receiving His Forgiveness and Gift of Righteousness puts you in a Cycle of victory over sin, whereas those who receive condemnation for every wrong thought in their mind enter a never-ending cycle of defeat. Do you see the difference?

In conclusion; think about this, out of

LAROCQUE: PAGE 21

Benefits of a Healthy Lifestyle with Exercise

Rick Bellanti
EXERCISE COLUMNIST

In response to one of my previous articles, I received this question: Rick, if what you eat is about 80% of your diet and exercise is only 20%, what is the benefit to doing 20% exercise?

The health benefits of physical activity and regular exercise are hard to ignore. Exercising regularly can boost your energy levels, boost your muscle strength (which boost your endurance levels), help you control your weight by burning calories, improve your emotional mood and promote better sleep habits (a huge one for me). You will feel better about yourself, get around much better and increase your chances of living a longer healthier life. It doesn't take much, as a general goal; try to aim for at least thirty to sixty minutes of physical activity every day.

Don't like the gym or can't get to a gym? There are simple techniques to improve your daily physical activities that do not require a gym membership. Try taking the stairs instead of an elevator, park your car in the furthest spot away from your destination and walk a little extra. Go for a walk on your lunch hour or take the kids to the park instead of watching TV. Just try to be more active throughout your day, it's these little changes that will add up before you know it and you'll see improvements.

When I started my weight loss journey back in February of 2015, I just stuck with my food plan filling my body with the proper nutrition (which I refer to now as fuel) and as the weight came off I found myself with more energy then I knew what to do with, in the past I stayed away from most physical activity and was not a fan of going to the gym.

I started out by just going for a walk and at first I would walk about a half a mile and turn around and come back, now I enjoy it so much I walk three to five miles daily. Try to keep it fun and you'll stick to it longer. Find a physical activity that you enjoy and also having a friend or family member joining you will help motivate you both to continue. It could be something as simple as taking a daily walk or hiking, to doing a gym activity like a spin class or a Zumba dance class.

Remember to always check with your doctor before starting any new exercise program if you have any concerns or chronic health problems such as diabetes, heart disease, arthritis or if you haven't exercised for a long time.

Rick Bellanti is a wellness columnist and is on a journey himself to lose 240lbs, and has lost 125lbs since the start of 2015. If you have any questions or comments, please post them to his Getting Healthy with Rick Bellanti Facebook page and once a month he will address a few of the topics here.

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AMERICAN LEGION NEWS

John Lenotte
VALLEY PATRIOT VETERAN COLUMNIST

As the months move along, the political races seem to get hotter and heavier in accusations and sometimes, outright attacks. It is certainly not a dull political scene. As a student of politics for quite some time, I can say that from my perspective, this is the wildest I can remember! Once the Democratic and Republican conventions have formally determined who will be the respective candidates, the race will continue to be dynamic, to say the least. As I keep repeating, to be an informed voter, one needs to go beyond the ads and attacks. Do some research online. Some of the sites I have mentioned in the past include: www.politifact.com and www.factcheck.org. These will help you weed through the "fog" and get to the real facts. What I continue to find disgusting is the millions of dollars spent on campaigning. Most of it could be put to good use helping out Americans who are truly in need of assistance.

There remain many issues affecting veterans and the VA. During a recent congressional hearing, The American Legion presented written and oral testimony regarding pending legislation on Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) oversights, access to health care, and the structure of claims and appeals management.

"Even in the best of circumstances, there are situations where the system cannot keep up with the health-care needs of the growing veteran population requiring VA services, and veterans must seek care in the community," the Legion stated in its written testimony. "Rather than treating this situation as an afterthought – an add-on to the existing system – the Department of Veterans Affairs must develop a well-defined and consistent non-VA care coordination program, policy and procedure to include a patient-centered care strategy which takes veterans' unique medical injuries and illnesses as well as their travel and distance into account."

Lou Celli, director of the Legion's Veterans Affairs & Rehabilitation Division, presented the Legion's views regarding Sen. Richard Burr's Veterans Choice Improvement Act of 2016 and Sen. John Tester's Improving Veterans Access to Care in the Community Act while testifying before the U.S. House Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

The Legion's written testimony also focused on recommended improvements to both bills, placing emphasis on eligibility, network structure, prompt payment requirements, and emergency and urgent care reimbursement. There is a commitment from The American Legion to continue to work with the VA to improve service to the nation's veteran population.

A recent report from the Associated Press noted that the Department of Veterans Affairs is suspending the head of the Veterans Benefits Administration for allowing two lower ranking officials to manipulate the agency's hiring system for their own gain. Two high-ranking officials forced subordinates to accept job transfers and then stepped into the vacant positions themselves, keeping their higher pay rate while reducing their responsibilities. Both were earning over $170 thousand dollars salary per year. Although this addresses some of the accountability issues, there is still more that needs to be done. The system is a good one, one The American Legion feels is worth saving. Congress and the Administration need to do more to deal with administrative abuses within the system.

May God Bless America and the troops and their families who sacrifice to keep us free.

John Lenotte, Commander, American Legion Post 4, Haverhill; Past Commander, Department of MA. I may be reached at: JohnLDistrict8@verizon.net

Protecting Public Employees

Oscar Camargo
VALLEY PATRIOT OPINION COLUMNIST

Do you like being blindsided? I imagine not, but that's exactly what's being done to our public employees.

It's not right. It's not fair. It's not smart.

On March 31, Andover held a meeting to discuss changes in the Retiree Health Insurance, which would alter said insurance and other ancillary benefits promised to retired public employees at the time of their employment. Retirees, many on fixed incomes, face the prospect of losing their well-earned benefits due to a broken promise.

I'm fiscally conservative--naturally I'm skeptical of government spending--but I also understand the value of investing. Our communities (Andover, Boxford, North Andover, Tewksbury) easily attract families and businesses--drawn to our quality schools, and safe neighborhoods--but this didn't happen overnight. We hired talented teachers, capable firefighters and police officers, because we offered better wages, benefits, and working conditions. Providing for public employees, both past and present, was worth the investment.

I'm also keenly aware that this responsibility is becoming a significant financial burden on our communities. We must balance our economic realities with the obligations we have to those who served our communities in the past and those who continue to serve it today. We need to work constructively with vested parties to develop a plan that not only secures retiree benefits but also secures our communities' financial health.

This isn't an easy issue to fix; however, a hardline stance in any direction isn't the solution. Our public employees--while performing difficult, sometimes thankless work--earned their benefits. They're not getting rich, but their services enrich our communities. We owe it them to honor their sacrifices by honoring our word.

LAROCQUE: FROM PAGE 28

all the things that Jesus could have left behind when he went to prepare a place for us, he left his Peace.

John 14:27, "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid."

I can't think of anything better than having Jesus' Peace! This Peace has free rule in our lives when we know how Completely Forgiven we are and how Perfectly Righteous in Christ God made us by His Grace! God's Grace is Greater than our Sin!

God Bless You All, Peter Larocque

AWARDS: FROM PAGE 11

goes to Jack Roy."

At that point, Valley Patriot publisher Tom Duggan took to the podium to explain why the next recipients are receiving a Goodwill Ambassador Award.

"Last year, I was contacted by Lisa Wood Henshall, the best friend of a girl that was murdered in 1985 named Michelle Pimental. She said she and Michelle's sister, Christy Rivera, had started a GoFundMe page to try and raise money for a gravestone recently, so that she would always be remembered and people could find her grave. Unfortunately, she said, they had only raised about $80 dollars in 6 months."

"So, I had them both on my radio program and put out a call to The Valley Patriot family and wow, did The Valley Patriot family step up to the plate!"

"As the result of donations from our readers, radio listeners and the Lawrence school children and administrators, we raised more than $4,000 for a headstone for Michelle."

"But, that's not all."

"When we finished the first radio show to raise money, I got a call from Mike and Candy Colizzi of Colizzi Memorials in Methuen. They have been faithful Valley Patriot advertisers for years. Mike told me that they wanted to help remember Michelle, and they really felt for her family and friends. Mike said that Colizzi Memorials would donate the cost of an upgraded headstone complete with laser imagery of Michelle on the front so that everyone who visits the grave will remember who she was and what she looked like."

"No matter what, we at The Valley Patriot always know that when we are trying to help other people, you our Valley Patriot family, always come through. So, tonight we thank our 2nd Goodwill Ambassadors Mike and Candy Colizzi of Colizzi Memorials and Haverhill resident Jack Roy."

VALLEY PATRIOT
PRESIDENT'S AWARD

Lowell Mayor Rodney Elliott, a fan and frequent contributor to The Valley Patriot then read the winners of the Valley Patriot President's award.

"The next award is The Valley Patriot President's award, the winners of which are picked by Tommy Duggan himself.

The award goes to someone who volunteers their time to gather information for stories, or pitches in to help in a unique way. Tonights winners are Maria Fiato and Janet Aldrich."

"Maria Fiato is receiving this award tonight because, if it wasn't for Maria, this bash wouldn't be taking place tonight.

The Valley Patriot's custom cartoonist Dave Sullivan retired this year and won the Editor's Choice Award for his years of contributions producing original content. THANK YOU DAVE! YOU ARE ALWAYS WELCOME BACK!

Maria has worked full time all year since last year's BASH, calling sponsors, organizing awards, and getting raffles and sponsors for this event. She also spent the last year volunteering her time 5 days a week, to organize The Valley Patriot office, deliver papers when needed, straightening out files, and Tom says that Maria Fiato works harder than he does ... which is hard to believe! It would be impossible tonight to give out Valley Patriot Awards without giving one to Maria Fiato."

"Our 2nd winner tonight is Janet Aldrich. Janet spends her time at The State House and the Federal Court video taping and taking notes for her Catch of the Day Video News organization."

"Last year, Tom got a tip that an illegal alien in Lawrence named Milagros Dominguez, (AKA Dirma Espada,) had been arrested by the feds for having 15 social security numbers and was being arraigned on Medicare fraud at the Federal Court. So, not being able to get into Boston the same day, Tommy put the call out on Facebook for anyone who could get into Boston to cover the hearing."

"It was Janet Aldrich, as she has done so many times before, who called and said she was at The State House and on her way to the Moakley Federal Court building where she spent the day taking notes, photos, and getting us one of our best stories all year. She is also someone who promotes The Valley Patriot everywhere she goes, and has, on behalf of The Valley Patriot, forced elected officials to allow her to videotape public meetings in courts, at public hearings and at The State House."

"Ladies and Gentlemen we are proud to present our two Valley Patriot President's Award to Maria Fiato and Janet Aldrich.

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LAWRENCE: FROM PAGE 12

opinion it is their duty to choose the most qualified person, and handing out stickers on Election Day does not qualify a person.

Watch to see if any other School Committee member benefits from this appointment.

Opening Day: I recently spoke with William Medina, the president of the South Lawrence West Little League. They will be having opening day ceremonies on April 30 at Mt. Vernon Park, with a rain date of May 1. The program starts at 9am with games starting at 11:30, when there will be a baseball and softball game between Special Olympics teams. The Lawrence Yankees and the East Boston High School Softball team will be assisting them.

Medina said, "This event is something that we hope to host for years to come with this year only being the start of an amazing tradition." Let's all get out to the park on April 30 to show our support for the Little League. Watch a ball game, have a hot dog and enjoy the day.

After all of the money spent last year to renovate the ball fields in Lawrence, only two Little League organizations are left in the city, both in South Lawrence. The rest have folded, with children and their parents opting for private skills camps that also use the city fields. The South Lawrence West Little League fields about 16 teams with over 300 children ranging in age from 4 to 15 years old. The season runs through July.

Renters Insurance: The Heal Lawrence organization, which helps victims of fires, is holding a Renters Insurance Fair April 23 from 10-1 at the Senior Center. I spoke with Wayne Hayes, who along with Juan "Manny" Gonzalez, runs this amazing organization. Hayes stated that many renters don't realize the landlord's insurance doesn't cover their possessions and that renters insurance is very affordable. There will be representatives from insurance agencies at the fair to provide information and answer any questions.

1ST AMENDMENT: FROM PAGE 8

hell of a lot to stun me. This public board, which is paid for with public dollars and appointed by public officials, refused to allow public participation at a public meeting. They held parts of their meeting in secret, refused to allow the doctor to have a legal representative present during their secret hearing on his case and, even with the knowledge that a reporter was in the room, admitted publicly that they do not follow Roberts Rules of Order and do not allow transparency."

"Honestly, after reading Dr. Bharani's columns over the last few years in the pages of our paper, I was looking forward to learning the other side of this conflict. In fact, I fully expected to attend this meeting, hear the other side's evidence against the doctor and walk out of that meeting saying to the doctor, "now that I know the other side you are full of shit.'"

"But, instead I walked out of there shaking my head that the corruption, lack of transparency, arrogance and steamrolling being done by BORIM was actually worse than Dr. Bharani said it was. Clearly if it wasn't for Dr. Bharani, there's a whole host of corruption in the medical field in Massachusetts that we would never know about."

DIANA DIZOGLIO - "Our second, 1st Amendment Award tonight goes to State Rep. Diana DiZoglio. Four years ago I submitted a bill to change the state's public records law, because there is no punishment for officials who violate it. It was State Rep. Diana DiZoglio, along with our 2014 winner, Senator Katy Ives, who sat down with me, walked me through the process of how to get a bill passed, and then fought for our public records bill."

"But, she not only fought for it publicly, she also worked behind the scenes to help us get this bill passed. Unlike some of the other legislators involved with this bill, not mentioning any names, Diana was actually proactive and didn't act like some others who think I should feel blessed that she even takes my calls. She called me every single time she heard anything about the progress of the bill, she testified at subcommittee meetings, and kept an open line of communication with my office. And, unlike some other legislators, she invited me to The State House to meet with legislators who were trying to change the language of my bill so that we could explain together why it was so important punish officials who willingly violate our state's public records law."

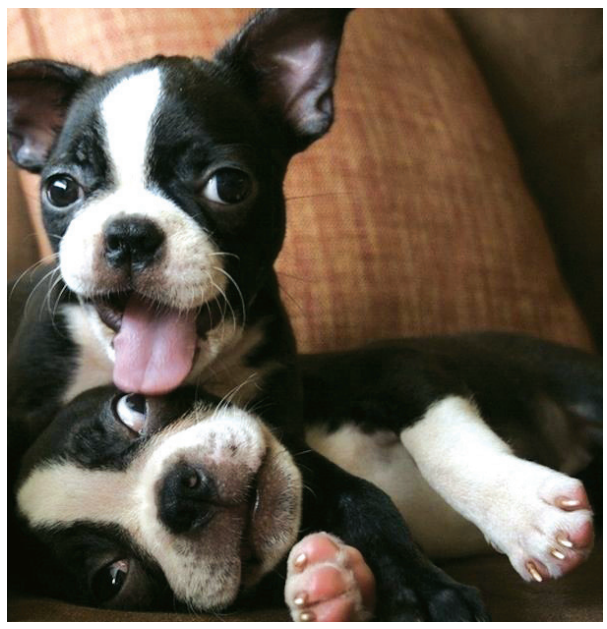
Thanks to Diana, and to be fair many others, my bill got a unanimous vote in the House, a unanimous vote in the Senate and we are expecting Governor Charlie Baker to sign the bill into law this year.

"She was nominated last year and the year before, but this year I am proud to say that our winners are Methuen State Representative Diana DiZloglio and Dr. Bharani Padmanabhan!"

For The Love of Boston

Tracey Zysk
VALLEY PATRIOT DOGGIE COLUMNIST

For the love of Boston...terrier that is! I admit it; I am a Boston terrier addict. I am that girl that is on every Boston Terrier Facebook page, I stop and pet every Boston Terrier that walks by me, and yes I even have Boston Terrier pajama's.



More importantly, I am the proud doggy parent to a very sweet and adorable BT named Lani. I adopted this little love of my life almost six years ago. She will be turning nine in August. I can't even imagine life without her in it.

People that don't have Bostons, really don't understand. They try and they ask me all the time. "Why? What is it about Bostons? Everyone that owns BT's are just like you." "Life is all about Boston Terriers."

There are three groups in life that are this way: People who love their Harley's, people who love their Jeeps, and people who love their Boston Terriers.

It's not that people who have other breeds don't care as much, its just people who have Bostons have BT blood in them. It is a rush, it is an infatuation and it is a pure obsession.

Here is a list of 10 reasons why BT's are just amazing:

1. Bostons are incredible family dogs. They are fabulous with children.

2. Bostons are awesome dogs for singles. They are great partners in "crime".

3. Bostons are small big dogs. They average 12-25lbs., but carry themselves like a Big Dog.

4. Bostons are not yippers or yappers, which make them great for condo or apartment living.

5. Bostons don't smell. They are one of the few breeds that do not get old dog or doggy body odor smell.

6. Bostons love to smile and love to make their owners laugh.

7. Bostons are total lap dogs and love to snuggle.

8. Bostons are goofy and actually like to be "dressed up", Lani has a closet of sweaters!

9. Bostons are dogs that are easy to travel with. I take Lani everywhere with me.

10. Bostons are the Official Dog of Massachusetts.

Any faults? No! Well, they do fart, and they are intelligent enough to do it at the most embarrassing time. As you are turning beat red, they look at you with that tilted head and big eyes. Instantly your heart melts. You forget how they just humiliated you. Life goes on and you obsess more...

Tracey Zysk, owner of Wiggles & Jiggles Pet Care in North Andover MA is a local pet care professional. She has been featured on local radio, TV and newspapers educating the general public on animal care and animal health & wellness. Tracey is a proud supporter of Police, Fire & Military K9 units and National Award winner of the Platinum PAW award. Tracey may be reached at wigglewalk@comcast.net. Become a fan on Facebook at Wiggles & Jiggles Pet Care

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THE DOCTOR IS ~~IN~~ BACK, TALKING PAIN ... AGAIN!

Dr. Rami Rustum (center) of the Merrimack Valley Pain Management Associates (LLC), now located at Sal's Riverwalk on Merrimack St. in Lawrence. Left to right are: Jacqueline Pinkney (MA), Aamariliz Baez (MA), Providence Rivera (secretary), Dr. Rula Youssef, Dr. Rami Rustum, Laura Moll (PA), Chelsea Hildebrandt (medical secretary), Kally Lachaeel (medical assistant), Katiria Rosario (secretary).

Dr. Rami Rustum
VALLEY PATRIOT PAIN COLUMNIST

It is my great pleasure to be back, communicating with the great readers of The Valley Patriot newspaper as I will be writing medical article, which will address every month different topic concerning pain and its management.

I will be glad to receive your questions, comments or requests for certain conditions by emailing me at the below listed email address.

We live in modern era where treating pain is no longer a luxury. It is a must!

As we know, in any medical facility treating patients, care givers including doctors and nurses always document what is known to be (The Vital Signs) which include values of the blood pressure, pulse, temperature and rate of breathing. Some argue that the oxygen level in the blood is attached to blood pressure or pulse. In the past few years, the federal medical authorities demanded adding pain score as the vital sign # 5.

This is to reflect on the importance of recognizing and treating pain, as no one should be left suffering!

Despite having good understanding of the problem and setting the treatment stage, we still deal with many problems and obstacles not limited to lack of reporting the problem to appropriate caregivers but extended to insurance treatment coverage, available pain management specialists, approved medications, pain medications abuse and diversion which is causing true medical crisis throughout the region and the country prompting imposing more regulations by many governing medical (and recently political) organizations which all have great impact on the patient-physician relationship!

In our time, pain as a lived experience, is no longer just a sign or simple matter to document! It is a true medical problem, a serious disease not less important than hypertension, diabetes mellitus or other medical conditions.

It is enough to know that pain is the second leading reason (first is cold symptoms) for visiting the doctor's office in the U.S. with $60-80 billions spent every year on treatment!

My intention is to raise the awareness about pain and its management in general, in addition to discussing crucial and very important points from real life, which could give you piece of mind or better understanding of the problem.

Rami R. Rustum, MD, Director, Merrimack Valley Pain Management Center

For questions or concerns, please email me at: merrimackpaincenter@gmail.com

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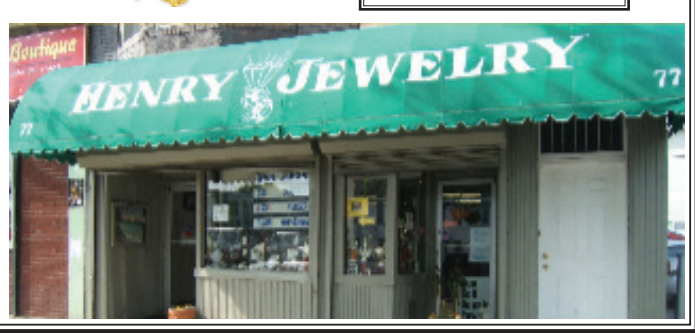

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Making it Easy for Government to Steal Our Medical Charts

Bharani Padmanabhan, MD, PhD
MEDICAL CORRUPTION COLUMNIST

John Ehrlichman authorized breaking into Dr. Fielding's office on September 3rd, 1971, to steal Daniel Ellsberg's medical chart. In those days, medical charts were confidential and access strictly controlled. Any break-in was physical and impossible to miss. Even if the government did steal your private chart, at least you knew about it.

Which is why Nixon's lawyer, Egil Krogh, went to prison for 4 months for violating Dr. Fielding's Fourth Amendment right.

One of the many lessons the government learned was that stealing medical charts needed to get easier. This eventually culminated in Executive Order 13335 (69 FR 24059) which ordered that all Americans must have their medical charts in electronic form.

Read it here - http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/WCPD-2004-05-03/pdf/WCPD-2004-05-03-Pg702.pdf

There never was a public democratic debate or a single public vote on something that is incredibly private and affects every single American.

Doctors, who are mostly of the spineless compliant variety, were paid from the Treasury to buy electronic chart software, called EHR now, from private vendors when the VA system had good software available for free.

Doctors who refused to spinelessly comply with the government now are punished by having their Medicare payments cut. So they see Medicare patients and give proper care but their payments are cut significantly because they refuse to make their patients' medical charts easily accessible to the government.

When the government wants to steal the chart of a patient who goes to a doctor who refuses to put patients' charts online, the government still has to physically break into the office. This costs money, for which the doctor is now dinged.

Even good doctors within the government who protected patient privacy have been forced to suddenly retire so they are no longer "in the way."

Naturally, in the great Glomar tradition, a cover story has been put out to explain why Americans' private medical charts must all be online where they can be stolen without the doctor or the patient knowing about it: EHR is good for you! It can save money! It can save lives!

Glomar is such a famous case; there is even case law now called the Glomar response. When people start digging into the underpinnings of Executive Order 13335 they should expect a few Glomar responses coming their way.

As expected, both doctors and patients have already figured out that EHRs impede good medical care. Doctors are angry about being turned into data entry operators. Patients are mad about doctors staring at a computer and tapping away instead of being a physician.

There isn't a single EHR system out there that actually supports improved medical care. The most spectacular failure was the epic EHR at Texas Health that even missed an Ebola case, which would NOT have been missed with the old paper chart.

http://www.beckershospitalreview.com/healthcare-information-technology/panel-cites-epic-ehr-challenges-as-contributing-to-ebola-misdiagnosis-at-texas-hospital.html

This is easy to understand once you know improved medical care was never the point. It was just the Glomar cover story.

Sometime in early 2015, Attorney General Maura Healey stole the private prescription data for about 50 patients of mine. As it was all electronic, neither my patients nor I even knew about this theft.

I found out only after Maura Healey falsely accused me of Medicaid fraud. If she had not, I would never have known

CHARTS: PAGE 27

KNOW YOUR BODY

North Andover Sr. Center Discussion on Colon Cancer Awareness and Aging

Dr. Frank MacMillan, MD
VALLEY PATRIOT MEDICAL COLUMNIST

This past Monday, March 28, I was invited by my good friend and fellow North Andover Board of Health member, Mr. Joseph McCarthy, to hold an interactive discussion at the North Andover Senior Center on colon cancer awareness and health matters related to aging. Though we discussed some ideas beforehand, we both agreed that telling Joe's story and leaving the discussion open-ended would be the best way to engage the audience and let the discussion go where the audience wanted. We were not disappointed, and our audience was completely engaged as we let them roam from topic to topic. Rather than us guessing what they wanted to know, they told us by their questions. I can't remember a more relaxed and fun event about a very serious topic, and where I had such a gracious audience asking Joe and I about things that just don't come up in daily conversation.

Joe is a member of the senior center and already knows many of the people who regularly gather there. He began with a heart wrenching personal story of his own health history, and in particular his failure to follow the advice of his doctor to be screened for colon cancer, despite having a close relative recently diagnosed with the same. Like many of us, he just did not believe it could happen to him. He was an important and very busy man used to giving, not taking advice at the time of his diagnosis. He was working as an engineering executive with many people reporting to him in the energy field and working in the US Virgin Islands. At the time he was stricken ill, for all the world it looked like appendicitis. After a brief hospital stay on St Croix, he flew to San Juan, then Atlanta, then after a significant delay, he finally got back to Boston. All this time, the cancer had made a perforation, or hole, in his large intestine and it is amazing that he even survived it. His next mistake was not taking an ambulance to the hospital. He was so sick and slouched over in the emergency waiting room, that a security guard thought he was malingering and told him to move along! He was then seen by a medical professional and quickly triaged to immediate surgery, which was successful. But in the recovery room, he got his real diagnosis from his surgeon, and it fell on him like a ton of bricks. When he went into the operating room, he was expecting appendicitis. In the recovery room, there was no hiding the truth that he had a locally advanced and perforated colon cancer. While the surgery was successful, he was not done with his treatment. 30 weeks of chemotherapy would be needed because the tumor penetrated through the intestinal wall, and not knowing what to expect, he was shocked at how devastatingly sick he would become on treatment. He tried to go back to work, and was very humbled and humiliated at how much loss of strength and stamina had occurred. After a particularly disastrous meeting, his subordinates demanded he take time off and not return until cleared by his doctor to return to work.

The story takes a positive turn here. He did recover, and he is well over 10 years out, 5 years being the practical definition of a cure. If you ask him what made the difference, it was a positive attitude and healthy state of mind. Although he had his moments of despair, he did what he needed to do. He is now the poster boy for taking the easy way (prevention) and not the hard way (treatment) that he chose. We used this as a transition to discuss risk and rewards with the audience, and the discussion was lively and interactive. I pointed out that one in nineteen Americans will be diagnosed with a colon cancer by age 80 if they are not screened, and that family history doubles that risk. We discussed that colonoscopy is the best test for most, because it finds it at a precancerous stage (polyp) allowing it to be removed and thereby preventing the disease. There are other ways to screen that also are proven to reduce risk including stool blood and DNA tests. The best way for an individual would be to discuss personally with your own doctor. If you ask people what they want from their health care, most will answer that they want to live well and prevent disease. I pointed out that lung cancer is the number one cause of cancer death, and that colon cancer is a close second. So by not smoking and getting a colonoscopy, you dramatically reduce your risk of a cancer related death.

We discussed screening related to aging, and when it is appropriate for most to be screened with colonoscopy and when to stop screening. This made a big impact to the audience. At age 75, not every person has the same health status. We know that some of us get there in relatively good shape, and some of us do not. In my own practice, I will usually have a frank discussion with the patient about how likely they would be to benefit, and also have a discussion on the risks, which are rare but real. Complications in a 50 year old are very different than someone who

COLON CANCER: PAGE 27

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Dr. Rustum Opens New Pain Management Clinic at Sal's Riverwalk!

This month marks the return of Dr. Rami Rustum as a columnist in The Valley Patriot. We sat down with Dr. Rustum last week to talk about what does, and what makes Merrimack Valley Pain Management Associates different from other pain clinics.

Dr. Rustum was born and raised in Syria where he eventually went to medical school. "I came to the U.S. for a research fellowship at Brigham and Women's hospital and Harvard Medical School in 1995. I moved to my residency in anesthesia at Tufts University."

After finishing his residency in anesthesia he went back to Brigham and Women's for a 2 year fellowship in pain management. That's when he got a job offer from the Lawrence General Hospital's Department of Anesthesia.

"So, I joined LGH in 2003 and established intervention team services (with my other colleagues) to take the pain clinic to the next level of cutting edge procedures not being offered in the area at that time, such as; pain pump implants, spinal cord stimulator implants for people who suffer from chronic back pain following multiple back surgeries or nerve damage."

Dr. Rustum stayed at LGH until 2009, and then moved to a private practice in Lawrence and established the Merrimack Valley Pain Management Center serving valley residents and beyond.

THE PAIN MANAGEMENT CLINIC

"Despite some hospitals having pain training, as a specialty it is still evolving and still on the rise. Pain is usually known as a symptom that can be the disease by itself, such as kidney disease, hypertension, etc. It is very important to know that pain is the second biggest reason people visit any physician's office. Pain is costing society up to $80B a year between treatment and lost days of work. But, most importantly, it's probably the single most medical condition that has a social and economical effect on the patient and their family. Meaning, someone with hypertension has to avoid certain medication, has a strict diet, and they can still work. But with pain, the pain will debilitate the patient in a vicious circle where they may exhibit the symptoms of depression. So, the pain is hurting the person physically, but also the person's economic productivity and the people around them."

"In short what people need to recognize, is that this is a medical and social problem which should be reported as soon as it happens.Then, it should be worked on or addressed by the caregiver and taken seriously to prevent possible negative consequences."

MERRIMACK PAIN MAKING IT BETTER

"Every patient is a unique case. Every patient is evaluated in a comprehensive way. Meaning, we need to evaluate his general health condition, we need to know his medications, we need to learn about his environment at home and work, because this is part of pain treatment. Pain can be affected by a person's environment and can affect a person's environment. So, this is important to know."

"In my opinion, to be successful in treating the patient who comes in with a chronic pain complaint, we should be able to provide a variety of treatment options and not be limited to one single treatment. What I mean by this, is that a lot of patients I see tell me they went to another pain clinic that told them they only do injections and the patient said it didn't work. So, they are skeptical. Some say, 'I went to a clinic and they seemed like chiropractors cracking backs, but give no pain medications or treatment.'"

"A successful pain management clinic or center should offer a variety of treatments based on the condition of the individual patient."

COME HERE EXPECT MORE

"Patients who come to us should expect their problem to be addressed with a series of options. Then, the evaluating physician needs to offer them the most appropriate treatments. However, the biggest obstacle we see is patients coming in requesting specific treatments, like medications, or they will come to the clinic under the impression that we only dispense meds, namely narcotics. Some come with the impression that a pain clinic is not a pleasant place, as they heard from neighbors or relatives that they had injections or some other procedures at other clinics and it crippled them."

"When we feel that we have a case which could benefit from injections and it is safe to do, we tell our patients to accept a second opinion at another clinic and we will even help arrange for them to get that second opinion."

"Patients who come to the pain clinic are usually patients who suffer from chronic pain, meaning they have pain conditions which have been happening for at least four to six months. However, if a patient who just underwent surgery is complaining about what could be incisional pain, (this is called acute or recent pain), that is something that should be taken care of by a surgeon."

"In our pain clinic, we manage a variety of cases not limited to spine injuries, but also including; abdominal pain, pelvic pain in men and women, cancer pain,

headaches, and in some selective cases we try to help by managing or regulating the existing pain medication regimen as prescribed by the primary care physician or treating physician."

"We offer what we call head to toe treatment. In most cases, other pain clinics just do back injections but we do everything."

"The last thing is that the Merrimack Valley Pain Management Center is proudly affiliated with prestigious pain centers in Boston like; Brigham and Women's Hospital, Harvard Medical School, Beth Israel, and the Deaconess Medical Center where we can always help arrange for further evaluations or second opinions if needed. We are affiliated with top spine surgeons at Harvard Med School and BU.

Finally we always strive to serve patients in the Merrimack Valley area and beyond, who are looking for one thing: excellence in service to the patient.

NOTEBOOK: FROM PAGE 9

that donated their services or charged us their cost for materials and services to make the 12th Anniversary BASH the most successful BASH ever. Keith Wlodyka of The Daily Dose Cafe donated all the food for the meal, as well as his services to cook and serve the meal at the event. Also donating food were: Sahtaine in Methuen donated the hummus, The Sweetheart Inn in Methuen donated the hot wings, Greg Fratto of the North end Deli donated two meat platters and rice balls, Gracemarie and Joyce Tomaselli homemade eggplant parmigiana and manicotti, Charlie's Diner on South Broadway in Lawrence donated the coffee and bread, the Firefighters Relief Association donated the hall, Henry's Jewelry and Awards on Essex St. in Lawrence donated the labor cost of etching the BASH awards, Bob Wescott of CopiLabs on Methuen St. in Lawrence donated the cost of labor for the program booklets, and the B STREET BOMBERS donated their services. Unfortunately we still had to pay for their road crew to help them set up so, our good friend Joe Zingales stepped to the plate and donated the $1,000 so there would be no cost to the BASH!

SALISBURY- THE B STREET BOMBERS HEADLINE NORTHEAST INDEPENDENT LIVING PROGRAM GALA

The Northeast Independent Living Program (NILP) is holding it's 35th Anniversary Celebration Gala at the Blue Ocean Event Center at the Seaglass in Salisbury, MA, on Saturday evening, April 23rd, at 6 P.M. This exciting NILP fundraising event includes a Silent Auction, Dinner, and Dancing to the high energy music provided by the popular group, The B Street Bombers. This Gala Celebration is black tie optional and will surely be an evening to remember. Tickets are available for this special celebratory event for $125 per person or $1,200 for a table of 10. To purchase tickets for this event securely online, please visit nilp.org. You may also contact NILP to purchase tickets by calling Zuleika Gonzalez at (978) 687-4288 Ext. 157. Please RSVP by April 8, 2016, if you plan to attend this celebratory event. To view all level of Sponsorships that are available and detailed related information, please click on the following link: NILP 35th Anniversary Gala Sponsorships There is also advertising space available in the event program book.

THE FRIENDS OF MERRIMACK VALLEY HOSPICE is hosting their third annual fundraiser brunch with a special floral demonstration by Steve Janavicus of Flowers by Steve on Sunday, April 17 at 9:30 a.m. at Indian Ridge Country Club, 73 Lovejoy Road in Andover, MA. The morning event will feature a full brunch buffet, followed by a floral arrangement demonstration by Steve Janavicus. Raffles will include the one-of-a-kind arrangements created by Steve during his demonstration, unique gift baskets, and other prizes. A beautiful collection of spring flowers, hanging baskets, and live plants will be available for purchase. Proceeds from the event benefit Merrimack Valley Hospice House located in Haverhill, MA. For more information or to RSVP by April 14, please call 978-552-4317or email friendsmvh@homehealthfoundation.org. Tickets must be purchased in advance.

LAWRENCE ROTARY CLUB FIREWORKS FUNDRAISER - Help the Lawrence Rotary Club Light Up the skies of Lawrence by supporting their efforts to raise $8K for the spectacular fireworks display scheduled for July 3, 2016 at Veterans Memorial Stadium. Join them at the Relief's In ~ 1 Market St. Lawrence, 7-10 PM~ Music by Frank "Ski" Skusevich. Raffle Drawings, Light Snacks, Cash Bar. Tickets can be purchased in advance or at the door for $15. All Ticket purchasers will be entered into a drawing for 2 pre-season Celtic Tickets! Donate on line at:GoFundMe.com/LightUpLawrence. For more information contact ~ Diane Shikrallah ~ 978-478-7317 ~ dshikrallah@comcast.net.

The Lawrence Rotary Club has served the Lawrence Community for the past 96 years and is dedicated to providing scholarships to high school graduates, community service grants, in school programs for students. Our goal is to ensure we continue to help build a future of success for our young people. All proceeds raised will go towards covering the cost of the fireworks as well as the many programs we coordinate with local agencies and schools. Rotary ~ Doing Good in the World! www.LawrenceRotary.org~ www.Rotary.org

NECC Hosts Elvis Show - Elvis will be in the house when Las Vegas's "Justin Shandor & Memphis Bound: The Ultimate Elvis Concert" appear at Northern Essex Community College's signature event on Saturday, October 1, at 7:30 p.m. at the Collins Center for the Performing Arts at Andover High School, 80 Shawsheen Road, Andover. This event is open to the public. Tickets, which are $50 per person, are now on sale.

For additional information visit www.necc.mass.edu/signature-event. To preview Justin Shandor as Elvis visit http://www.justinshandor.com

REEL TIME PRODUCTIONS *PRESENTS* SENIORS THAT ROCK!!! TALENT SHOW

Auditions will be open for all performing who are at least 55-years-old and older. Come and share your talents. AUDITIONS to be held on April 23rd & 24th at Rockingham Park Race Track in Salem, NH 03079. REGISTRATIONS & AUDITIONS TO BEGIN AT 9AM. Show to be held on September 25th at the J. Everett Collins Center for the Performing Arts100 Shawsheen Rd. Andover, MA. PRIZE FUND 1st Place $1000 2nd Place $500 3rd Place $300. For more information call (603) 893-1421 or visit our Website at Reel-TymeProductions.webs.com. Veterans working and supporting Veterans of Foreign Wars Seniors helping Seniors supporting Dementia & Alzheimers

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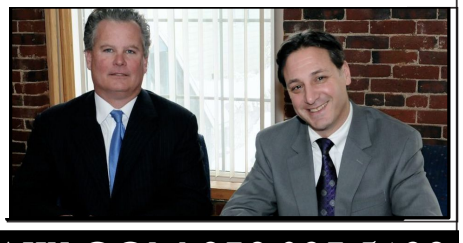
Where the Merrimack Valley turns to for legal counsel



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TV TALK: FROM PAGE 18

survive the September 11 terrorist attacks and built his company out of the ashes. Or was there more to it? He now pays for the college tuition of the children of his former partners. But even that makes us wonder about his ulterior motives.

Billions is a thoroughly entertaining series that has enough great writing and terrific acting to keep even the most finicky TV watcher satisfied.

Billions airs Sunday nights at 10 on Showtime and can also be seen on Showtime On Demand.

Do you have any questions about TV? Email me at BillsTVTalk@gmail.com. I will answer all of your questions and will feature some of the questions I receive in a future column.

Follow Bill on Twitter @BillsTVTalk and on Facebook at Bills TV Talk for daily up-to-the-minute TV news and discussion.

CHARTS: FROM PAGE 25

about her theft.

If Maura Healey could so easily swipe the private prescription records of my patients, surely it is something she is comfortable doing, routinely, without any fear of ending up in prison like Egil Krogh.

This fact, dear Americans, proves the supreme utility of EHRs for the government. It keeps government officials out of prison for violating your most private records. That is the true function of EHRs, when you strip away the whole Glomar cover story.

In fact Maura Healey has been so emboldened by the new way that she actually hosted a seminar on Data Privacy posing as the savior of the people, as the leader of "the People's Law Firm." If John Ehrlichman were still alive he would be green with envy.

https://internetpolicy.mit.edu/sites/default/files/images/Event-MassAGO-Flier.pdf

https://internetpolicy.mit.edu/forum-data-privacy

But wait, you say, the elites of this country surely go to doctors too. Yes indeed, to doctors who ensure their private personal medical charts never ever touch the internet.

If you want your medical records to remain safe and out of the government's hands, go to a doctor who chooses to remain "air-gapped" on behalf of the patients even when the government punishes it with a hefty fine. That doctor is truly for you.

Bharani Padmanabhan MD PhD is a neurologist who specializes in multiple sclerosis in the Boston area. scleroplex@gmail.com

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MEETING

SATURDAY APRIL 9, 2016
9:00am - 11:00am
Lawrence Senior Center, 155 Haverhill Street

HEROIN CRISIS
a presentation by the Lawrence/Methuen Community Coalition on steps taking place to help resolve this crisis in the Merrimack Valley

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COLON CANCER: FROM PAGE 25

is over age 75. The American College of Gastroenterology does not recommend routine screening with colonoscopy over the age of 85, and the evidence suggests that the risks outweigh the benefits at older ages, so it must be an individualized discussion between ages 75 and 85, which really resonated with the audience. We had some great discussion on probiotics and the bacterial flora, also known as the human microbiome, which could be a topic on its own. It turns out that some bacterial species are found in association with cancer and others are not. Whether taking a commercial supplement can alter that risk remains to be proven, but it is a fascinating topic that we will learn about more in the years to come.

About one third of people in the United States who are eligible for colorectal cancer screening fail to be screened. These are the healthy people who are age appropriate and for a multitude of reasons just don't seem to be able to pull the trigger and get it done. My friend Joe was among them, and he learned that there is an easy way and a hard way. He has the fervor of a religious convert and definitely feels that the easy way is the way to go. Go do yourself a favor and have a discussion with your doctor about what kind of screening you may need and whether screening for precancerous polyps makes sense for you!

Dr MacMillan specializes in Gastroenterology and Liver disease and is a member of the North Andover Board of Health. Dr Macmillan is an Officer and Vice Speaker of the House of Delegates at the Massachusetts Medical Society and alternate Delegate from Massachusetts to the American Medical Association. Dr MacMillan practices in Haverhill, and is on staff at Holy Family Hospital Haverhill and Methuen, Anna Jaques Hospital in Newburyport, Lawrence General Hospital, and Parkland Hospital in Derry, NH and is a founding member and President of the Massachusetts Gastroenterology Association. Dr MacMillan has served as Massachusetts Governor of the American College of Gastroenterology since 2011 and is a Fellow of the College.

LOWELL: FROM PAGE 17

Aren't you living in fear? Where is this coming from?

I say, what about the love of my family and yours? What about the safety of my family and yours? I ask why, because some of us want to act high minded and progressive that we should take un-necessary risks or fail to be cautious. That somehow in progressive circles that caution, safety and concern is racist, ignorant or un-American. That somehow wanting to peacefully watch a local marathon without fear of death is being a xenophobe.

You see folks, I don't speak from an uneducated view of Islamic extremism. I lived with it for over six months, while serving my country in Saudi Arabia. I've seen extreme views; I've lived with extremists that wished to convert my fellow service members and me. I've looked into the eyes of Islam from the Middle Eastern point of view and know there is no room for negotiation when it comes to Allah and their perception of me… the infidel. I've seen and experienced things that I really don't want my children or your children to have to experience as a civilian that I experienced with the might of the United States Military.

So I ask you the reader to consider something as we get closer to choosing the next President of the United States. Do you want someone in the Oval Office that is going to be the Good Shepherd or someone who will allow the wolves to terrorize the flock? Someone who will protect your children with strength or someone who is going to invite the wolves into your home under the auspices of progressive high mindedness?

I ask you, the reader in the quiet towns of Westford or perhaps Andover, what happens when your local coffee shop is bombed? I know that you could ask the residents of San Bernardino, California how they feel. Oh, and I say how you have forgotten New York City, the Pennsylvania farmland and the Pentagon on September 11, 2001. I never will forget.

Folks, I believe this is a time to accept reality and to accept that we live in a world of "it's either us or them". It's our brains on the battlefield or theirs. Terrorism has taken root in the cities of Europe and yes, terrorism is here in the United States. We need to choose our next leaders wisely. We need to consider our choices and put pressure on those who would not grant our local police access to military grade equipment. We must challenge those who would allow undocumented illegals to drift in and out of our society at will. We must challenge those that would falsely accuse those of us who side with safety, protectionism and patriotism as racists, bigots or somehow in a bizarre interpretation of values… Un-American.

Finally, I challenge the reader. I challenge you to stand up for your family and your country. I say fight for your town, city, state and country. Be a patriot, be proud of your American values and know that there is no greater moment in American history to do so. Every citizen from every corner of the country must know what is at stake as a country. And what's at stake for your own safety, soundness and existence itself…

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